

Old Sleuth Library

THE BOY DETECTIVE.

A SERIES OF THE MOST THRILLING DETECTIVE STORIES EVER PUBLISHED.

No. 65.

{ SINGLE
NUMBER. }

GEORGE MUNRO'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,
Nos. 17 to 27 VANDEWATER STREET, NEW YORK.

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Vol. IV.

Old Sleuth Library, Issued Quarterly.—By Subscription, Twenty-five Cents per Annum.
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OR, THE

CHIEF OF THE COUNTERFEITERS.



Without stopping to raise the window, the burglar sprang through, carrying glass and sash through with him.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

OUR story opens in the great metropolis—the city of New York.

Two persons were seated upon a rustic bench, in the park, conversing earnestly.

"Will you be mine, dearest, when I return from this journey?"

The young girl to whom this question was addressed looked up in the face of the speaker, with a glance of trusting confidence, as she answered blushing:

"Yes, dear William, if you wish it so."

William Wilson was as fine and noble-looking a youth as you would wish to see—tall, and well built, with a most pleasing expression of countenance.

A high, noble forehead, surmounted by curling, wavy hair. His mustache, drooping over his mouth, almost completely hid the expression of that organ. Yet the square chin, and the determined look of his eye, showed him to be of a strong mind and will; one who could not be deterred from his object by any obstacles in his path.

His companion, Mattie Templeton, was petite in figure, with a fair complexion, and hair as dark as midnight, while her eyes, black and sparkling, fairly danced in her head as she conversed with her lover.

They were seated, at the time, upon one of the rustic benches in the park.

It was the month of June, and the earth was teeming with verdure.

Though the heat in the city was almost overpowering that day, yet, in the park, beneath the shade of the spreading trees, the weather was delightful.

It was Saturday afternoon, and from where they were seated they could hear the strains of the band as they floated upon the still air.

It was a fitting place in which they might commune with each other.

William held Mattie's small, soft hand in his own, as he said:

"You have made me very happy by those words, Mattie. But what do you think your father will say to my suit?" he asked, presently. "I fear he does not seem to care enough for me to regard me as his future son-in-law."

It may be but an idle fancy, but I have thought that he seems to think a good deal of Samuel Perry, who has a large income, and who would be able to surround you with all those comforts which it is your privilege to possess."

An expression of sadness crossed the features of the girl as she answered:

"I fear that it will be difficult to induce him to give us his consent. But we must do what we can toward it."

"As for Samuel Perry, he seems to have the faculty of reading others' characters; for by seeming to sympathize with father in his views, and by humoring him in his weak points, he has completely won his good graces, and he seems to think there is no one in the world that is as pleasant a companion as Perry."

"For my part, there is something about the man that I do not like. I have in vain attempted to fathom the meaning or cause of my aversion to him, but without success. When I am in his presence, I endeavor in vain to throw off a feeling of dislike which will invariably come over me."

"His eyes remind me somehow of a snake's, they are so black and glittering; and I always dread to encounter his gaze."

"Well," answered William, "I know nothing against the man; but I perfectly agree with you in your dislike for him; he has not the look of an honest man, and somehow or other I feel as if he is to be in some manner connected with my future career."

"I earnestly hope not," said Mattie, with a grave face; "but perhaps we are only borrowing trouble, instead of looking upon the bright side."

"But we must be going," spoke the young man, as he glanced at his watch; "it will be dusk before we reach our homes."

So saying, they both arose, and left the spot, continuing their conversation as they walked.

"Did you not say you were going to leave me for awhile?" she asked.

"Yes," was the reply; "my employers desire me to take a trip to Savannah to attend to some business there, by which, if I am successful, I shall be able to advance myself greatly in their interests."

"And when do you leave?"

"The steamer sails Monday afternoon."

"So soon as that?"

"Yes, darling; my employers wished it so."

"Then I shall not see you again until you return?"

"I shall try and see you to-morrow evening and attend church with you, if you wish me to."

"Certainly, dear William," answered the girl, with a frank smile.

"And now how long do you expect to be gone upon this trip?"

"Well," he answered, "that is a rather difficult question to answer, but I think the business will take about a month to attend to."

"Oh, what a long time to be absent from you!" she said, with a blush.

"And it may be," continued the young man, "that my employers will wish me, if successful, to stay there permanently, and, in that case, I shall soon return for my little treasure, and take her back with me. Will she come?" he asked, playfully tapping her cheek.

With a look of perfect trust and confidence, she turned her face to him, as she answered:

"Whither thou goest, I will go, if it be unto the uttermost ends of the earth."

"Your faith in me shall never have cause to regret," he said, gravely and earnestly.

They had now reached the park entrance upon Eighth Avenue, and taking a car, they were soon hurried into the heart of the great city.

Reaching Twenty-third Street, they alighted, and soon came to the home of Mattie Templeton, a fine large mansion owned by her father.

Bidding his betrothed an affectionate good-evening, Wilson wended his own way to his boarding-house, situated in West Twenty-ninth Street.

He was a young man of rising abilities, and his employers had done well in selecting him as the proper person to be sent upon their business. The firm was that of "Perkins & Jones," one of the wealthiest and most influential in South Street.

The future was therefore one of bright prospects to the young man, as he hoped soon to be able to claim the fair Mattie as his bride, for in that case her father could have no objections to offer.

One thing troubled the young man's mind

seriously, and that was the pertinacity with which the man Perry attempted to force his company upon her.

He determined, however, to give no further thought to the matter, "for," said he to himself, "if he makes himself too obnoxious, Mattie will surely appeal to her father, and then his impertinence will be corrected."

He had now reached his apartments, and passed directly to his room.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW.

As Mattie passed the parlor, the door of which was slightly ajar, she heard the voice of Samuel Perry in conversation with her father. She proceeded immediately to her own chamber, and removing her wrapper, she seated herself in a luxurious arm-chair and gave herself up to thought.

Long and earnestly did she endeavor to solve the question—how to best communicate to her father the news of their engagement.

She glanced down at the ring placed upon her finger that day by William, as if that would give her a clue as to the best way to proceed; but the ruby, sparkling and flashing back the rays from the chandelier overhead, was silent.

"Well," she finally murmured to herself, "I will try and see what influence there is in a daughter's love. I will do my duty toward him, as far as lies in my power, provided, of course, that he does not interfere between William and myself."

Presently she heard the voice of her father calling her name.

He desired to see her for a few minutes in the sitting-room.

Hastily arranging her toilet, she descended the stairs and entered.

As she opened the door, she was dismayed to find that Sam Perry was the only occupant.

Making a stiff bow, in a few constrained words she greeted him, and seated herself by the window, and busied herself in watching the pedestrians as they passed.

She could feel that the eyes of Perry were intently fixed upon her, and not caring to meet his gaze, she resolutely looked out of the window.

Presently he addressed her in a smooth, slippery tone, which would cause a person involuntarily to think of a serpent.

"Miss Templeton, I had hoped that my visit would have been more welcome to you."

"The friends of my father are always welcome to the house," she replied.

"Yes; but I would desire more; I would wish that my coming would be of more interest to the fair occupant of the house."

Mattie made him no answer.

Perry now drew his chair to the window, where she was seated, and in a finely modulated voice, he began a conversation upon indifferent subjects.

He was a fine talker, and his conversation showed him to be well versed in the ways of the world.

Unconscious almost of the fact, Mattie was soon interested in his remarks and his accounts of travel and dangers by land and sea.

So the time passed quickly away.

Perry flattered himself that he had made a decided impression upon the young lady.

Self-conceit is always blind to the truth.

Finally, he begged that she would favor him by playing, as he must shortly depart.

Mattie politely consented, and seating herself at the instrument, rattled off one of those airy nothings with which the country is flooded, having finished the piece she arose from the seat.

"Will you not favor me also?" she asked, gayly.

"Certainly," he laughed, as he took the vacant stool.

After a few preliminary flourishes, he struck off in a weird, gypsy-like air.

Keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon Mattie, who stood beside him, he kept on playing; the sounds now rising high and tempestuous, then falling, low, soft, and plaintive.

His was a master hand that governed the instrument.

Still more those magnetic eyes held the girl as in a spell.

It flashed through the maiden's mind that Perry was a mesmerist.

In vain she struggled to avert her face from

him; her will was as nothing compared to his own.

Yet the feeling was not a disagreeable one to her; it seemed as if she were standing alone, while far in the distance she could hear the most entrancing music. The place was one of extraordinary loveliness, flowers of the most bewitching beauty were budding and blossoming all around her; bright-hued birds were singing amid the branches; a beautiful fountain was throwing up its clouds of silver spray, as it flashed and sparkled in the sunlight. One object only in the whole scene disturbed her; a large serpent seemed to be coiled directly in her path. His body was coiled up, and his eyes, fixed upon her now, were emitting dazzling sparks of light.

Presently a rude, discordant jar in the music, and she came to herself.

Those evil eyes of Perry's still met her own as he asked her, "If she was pleased with the music?"

She made him no answer, but took a seat near by.

A step was shortly heard upon the stairs, and Mr. Templeton entered the room just as Sam Perry arose to leave it.

"What! going so soon?" he asked, in a frank, hearty voice. "Well, you must call again shortly."

"I shall be most happy to do so," said Perry, as he glanced at the maiden to see if she would say anything; but Mattie was silent; so, bidding them good-evening, Perry left the house.

After he had departed, Mr. Templeton turned to his daughter, saying playfully: "He is a fine fellow, Mattie; just such a man as I should desire to have for a son-in-law;" and he smiled, complacently.

"God forbid that you should ever have such a son-in-law as that man would make," thought Mattie to herself, but she said nothing.

"By the way," he exclaimed, "I hear that your friend, William Wilson, is to sail for Savannah in a few days; have you heard anything about it?"

"He leaves on Monday, I believe," she answered, with a conscious blush.

"Well, I can not say that I shall be very sorry for it," he said, "for I was beginning to fear that he was paying altogether too much attention to you for a poor man."

"And does being poor make him any the less noble?" asked Mattie, spiritedly.

"Well, not exactly," answered her father, surprised at the vehemence of her manner; "but then you know what society would say about such a thing; not that I dislike the young man, for I deem him honorable, and all that sort of thing; but then, you know, it will be a number of years before he will be able to make much of a name for himself, and then, think how the world would talk."

"And am I to be governed by what the so-called world may say concerning me?" she asked, as her eyes flashed. "Is the happiness or misery of two persons to be decided by the word of two or three rulers of society? I care not for their idle words; and now, father," she continued, "I have a secret to tell you: I love William Wilson, and—"

"Love him!" said the old man, aghast.

"And," continued Mattie, not heeding the interruption, "I am engaged to him."

The old man's face expressed his astonishment; finally he said, scornfully, "And you cared not enough for your father to inform him of this before."

"Nay, father," she answered, gently, "it did not occur until this afternoon. William intended to ask your consent ere he sailed."

"I shall not grant it," said the old man, testily.

"What! a daughter of mine contract an alliance against my wishes. I did not think it possible," he said in a grievous voice.

"Father," said Mattie, earnestly, as she arose, and put her arms around her parent's neck, "would you have me marry a man whom I do not nor never could, love? And Perry is just such a man. I loathe the sight of him."

Mr. Templeton made no reply, but groaned deeply.

Mattie continued to plead with him; yet his stubborn spirit still fought against it, and finally he arose to leave the room.

The girl saw it would be useless to remonstrate with him further, so she did not attempt it.

She was half tempted to tell him of Perry's

conduct that evening; but she refrained, thinking it would only annoy him while in this humor, without being productive of the least good.

Bidding each other good-night, he, in a grievous voice, hers, calm, and affectionate, they retired to their separate apartments, and were soon lost in sleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

THE night was a dark, cloudy one the fog hanging heavily in the air as the ferry-boat "Fulton" left her slip in the East River, on her trip to Brooklyn.

The passengers, what few there were at that late hour, were nodding and dozing in the cabins, to pass the time, until they could reach the other side. The decks were totally deserted.

Did I say totally? I was mistaken; for another glance would convince us of the fact that a solitary person was leaning upon the rail forward.

He wore a heavy cloak, and a hat slouched down over his eyes.

For what purpose is he traveling in this stealthy manner? And who is he?

Now he gives utterance to his darkly forming thoughts.

"Let me see," he mutters, "how am I to get this Wilson out of my path, for it is plainly to be seen that I can do nothing while he is around. Curse him! he seems to be my evil destiny; first, he obtains possession of the papers which are of so much value to me, and not satisfied with that, he must love the girl whom I have set my mind upon gaining for my wife. But never mind, young man;" and his white teeth grated fiercely together—"never mind, you and I have an account to settle yet; but first I must have those papers you hold, and after that I will talk about revenge."

"Thank fortune," he exclaimed, presently, "that she is out of my path. She will never trace me here by my name—'twould be no use to her if she did, for to save my life I don't know what became of the child."

"But now for business," for the ferry boat was entering the slip. "If I can find Jones at the old place I will be well paid for the uncomfortable trip;" and stepping ashore, he drew his hat still lower over his eyes, and walked rapidly on through the driving rain.

He had proceeded on about a dozen blocks, when he came in violent contact with a person coming from the opposite direction.

The sudden collision threw the new-comer to the ground, and nearly accomplished the same end for Perry.

Rough words were about to be indulged in between them, when Perry suddenly exclaimed: "Why, Tom Jones, you are just the man I was looking for."

"Blast my eyes," said the stranger, "yer needn't have introduced yerself so suddint! How the deuce was I ter know yer in that rig? I reely thort you was in Philadelfy, Sinclair."

"Hist!" growled Perry; "don't you ever breathe that name again. I have dropped it forever."

"And wot name do you sail under now?"

"You are to call me Perry—Sam Perry," was the reply.

"All right, cap; and now for the business you wanted to see me about."

"I will tell you that presently," answered Sam; "but let us get out of this confounded rain, for I am wet through to the skin."

"Why the deuce didn't yer bring an umbrella while yer was about?" said Tom; "but it's too late now to grumble, I suppose, so let us step in the resturant, and we can talk over affairs."

"Agreed," said Perry; and they entered the saloon together.

The proprietor and a sleepy-looking waiter were all the occupants to be seen.

Seating themselves in a private box, they called for refreshments.

Sam Perry appeared to be a deep rogue, for he drank but very little, though he continued to press it upon his companion, who, nothing loath, drank deeply.

It was not long before the effects of the liquor began to appear in his countenance; his eyes shone fire, his breath came quicker, and his tongue became loosened.

He was just in that mood which would make ordinary persons beware how they angered him.

Sam now drew his chair close up to him, and seemed to be endeavoring to win him over to some purpose of his own; but Jones appeared to be unwilling to undertake the job.

He continued to shake his head and mutter: "No, indeed; there's too much risk to be run; I darsn't try it."

"Very well," said Perry; "then I have something to tell you that will cause you to change your mind."

So saying, he leaned over and whispered a few words in his ear.

The effect upon the villain was magical. Springing to his feet, and his whole attitude that of a wounded animal at bay, he drew a large dirk-knife from his breast, and seemed ready to plunge it into the heart of Perry.

Quick as his motions had been, yet he was behind those of Sam, who, with the rapidity of a flash, had drawn a revolver from his pocket, and cocking it, had coolly laid it upon the table, within reach of his hand, while, with his eyes fixed upon Tom, he sternly commanded him to take his seat. For a moment the villain wavered, but only for a moment, and then he sunk back upon his seat, completely cowed under the gaze of Perry.

"Well," growled Jones, sullenly, "wot are yer going to do with all yer information? 'Spose you are goin' to give me up ter the perlice, ain't yer?"

"Not if you do what I wish you to," he replied. "If the job is done satisfactorily, I will keep your secret, and not only that, but will pay you a handsome sum besides."

Tom's eyes glittered as he heard the mention of money; but in a moment he asked, in a faltering voice, "Is it more—is it like what—like what you spoke of a—minute ago?"

As he spoke, his eyes glanced restlessly around the room, as if he expected to see a sudden apparition.

"No," replied Sam, with a start; "it is not so bad as that, this time, unless"—and he hesitated—"unless you should happen to fail and be in danger of capture; and in that case, you must do whatever you think best; but remember, if you are caught I will have no mercy on you, but will aid in your prosecution. And now, is there any one whom you can take into your confidence to assist you?" he asked.

After thinking a moment, his companion answered:

"Jerry Williams would have ben jest the feller, but I don't know where to find him, so I 'spose I will have to do the job alone."

"Very well," was Perry's answer; "and now I will meet you to-morrow night, at—"

The rest of the sentence was whispered in the ear of the other.

"And now," he continued, "do not fail me, or your life will be a forfeit;" and as he spoke, he bent a glance full of meaning upon Tom which made him shrink further from him.

"I shall not back out, after I sed I would take the job," was the retort.

And so they parted.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DETECTIVE.

In the next box to that in which the conspirators had been seated, and concealed from an ordinary view by the curtain, was an odd-looking personage. His appearance, his wrinkled face, and white hair, together with the trembling limbs, would denote him to be about the age of seventy. His garments, though threadbare, were scrupulously neat.

A slight repast was spread before him, but it had hardly been disturbed.

In fact, he had but entered the saloon a few minutes before Perry and his companion, and this strange-looking individual was none other than Gus Thompson, one of the most noted detectives of the day.

When the voice of Perry had just reached his ear, he disregarded the meal before him, and placing himself in a listening position, so that he might catch every word that was dropped, he had heard all that passed between them, with the exception of the secret that had caused Jones so much uneasiness, and also the directions where the meeting was to be held.

"So, so," he muttered; "I shall have to look out for you, Sam Perry. I'll bet my last dollar that you are up to some of your old tricks again. But wait, my fine fellow; I will block your game yet."

Perry and his accomplice had now departed, and the detective, in keeping with his assumed

character, hobbled up to the bar, and paying for his refreshments, tottered out in the darkness.

"Quite an old cuss, that, to be traveling alone at this time of night," said the proprietor to his sleepy servant, who nodded acquiescence to his master's remark, and once more the room became silent.

Upon reaching the street Thompson remained a few moments in a state of indecision, till finally a blue-coated guardian of the night tapped him on the shoulder, and in a gruff voice he growled out:

"Time you were at home, old codger, instead of standing here in the street. Must move on out of this."

An amused expression flitted across the face of the detective, but he merely answered in a thin, piping voice:

"Very well, very well, young man. I'm going; but I would advise you to pay more respect to gray hairs."

"Ha! ha! pretty good joke!" laughed the policeman. "But gray hairs ought to be in bed by this time;" and he strolled off in the gloom.

The detective proceeded in an opposite direction, and, after ten minutes' walk, he came to a quiet-looking house which stood a little back from the public street.

Glancing around him in the darkness, to see if any one was near, he cautiously applied his key to the door, and quickly entered.

As he passed in the hall, no appearance of age was in his movements. On the contrary, he was stealthy and gliding in all his maneuvers; not a sound was heard as he ascended the stairs, and touching a spring, a door flew open, and he entered the apartment.

A glance shows that it is his room. Hanging upon the walls are innumerable costumes, dresses, etc.; one might almost fancy it to be the dressing-room of a theater.

Upon the bureau in the corner were wigs of all kinds, false beards of all kinds, false mustaches, etc.

Hastily closing the door behind him, the detective pulled off his boots and coat, and proceeded to divest himself of his disguise.

A glance at the boots, as they lay on the floor, reveals the secret of his silent movements. The soles are covered with felt.

He next took off his white wig, disclosing his own raven black hair beneath.

After washing the wrinkles from his face, and removing a false spine, which had caused him to assume a stooping posture, he stood erect—a splendidly formed man in the prime of life, and about thirty years of age. His frame denoted him to be of strong physical powers. He next removed from his breast a mysterious leather case, which he always carried with him, and the use of which will be seen ere long in our story.

The door through which he had entered was a peculiar one. The knob was so arranged that upon being touched by a person outside it rang a bell at the head of the bed. The lock was also constructed so that in case of a key being introduced into it connected the two poles of a powerful galvanic battery, and therefore giving the would-be intruder a shocking reception.

The true character of Thompson was unknown in the house; they supposed him to be an eccentric old man, and rich, for he always had money at his command, and his board bill was always promptly paid.

But to go back to our story:

The detective now seated himself at a small black walnut desk that stood in the corner of the room, and drew forth from one of its recesses a small pocket diary, and rapidly jotted down notations in hieroglyphic characters, the key to which was known only to himself.

"Let me see," he mused; "what could it have been that caused Jones so much uneasiness; can it be possible that he was 'implicated in the attempted murder of old Hawkins, the clergyman?'" So saying, he drew forth from his desk a number of diaries, exactly similar to the one which he had been using, and opening one of them, he studied it carefully.

"Yes, that must have been it," he said presently, "for he left the city two days after the occurrence, so he could not have heard that the clergyman did not die, as was first reported."

"I'll bet any amount of money that Jones had a hand in that affair. No wonder he fled, for no one could have possibly believed that a man could have lived after such an ugly wound as that was."

"I wonder where Hawkins is. Now, let me see," he said, thoughtfully; "it is now some eight or nine months since I saw him last, and then he was living in New York. I shall have to hunt him up. Perhaps he may give me some clew to the matter, and so I shall do a double service by preventing a double evil. I wonder where that boy can be though," he said, glancing at his watch; "it is past the time I told him to be here."

Hardly had the words passed his lips before a gentle knock was heard at the door, followed by a peculiar double rap.

This seemed to satisfy the detective, for opening the door, he admitted the boy whom he had been expecting to see. The appearance of the new-comer was, to say the least, a strange one; of medium stature for his age, which was about fifteen, light curling hair, which at present was matted and tangled, and a face which was of a highly intellectual cast of features, and which possessed the power of being transformed into numerous expressions at the will of the owner thereof. His eyes were bright and piercing, except on certain occasions, when they would assume a dull, sleepy expression for a moment, and then flash out again full of fire and energy. Entering the room in an easy, careless manner, the lad threw himself in a large easy-chair, and coolly awaited his employer's pleasure.

Among his acquaintances he was known by the "sobriquet" of "Butts."

"Well, what news?" asked Thompson; "are you going to sit gazing at the ceiling all day, instead of making your report?"

"Well, fact is, guv'nor," said Butts, "I hain't much news to tell, you see. I spotted the feller you told me to, but I think he tumbled to it, for he tuk a hack, and I lost sight of it in the crowd; but I know the cove that drives it, and I kin find out from him to-morrow whar he tuk the feller, and if you want—"

"Enough of that slang," interrupted the detective. "How often have I told you not to use such language while you are with me; now go on."

"Well," said the boy, in a changed voice and most perfect accent, "you see, Mr. Thompson, I have to make use of these slang phrases so much that I forget myself some times. But who do you think I saw to-day?"

"Who?" asked the detective, quickly.

"Well, you remember Mr. Hawkins, or old Harker, as I used to call him, the fellow who you saw about a year ago when he was nearly murdered in New York; well, it was him I saw."

"Do you know where he went? Can you find him to-morrow?" asked Thompson, all in the same breath.

"One question at a time, sir, if you please," said the boy, coolly; "as I was unaware of the fact that you wished to know his whereabouts, and as I already had one person to follow up, I paid no further attention to him."

"Bother!" ejaculated the detective; "you have been of no service at all to-day; you should have followed the carriage at all hazards; but never mind, if you know who the driver is, I suppose you can find out everything to-morrow that I care about for the present; but now you must go, and if by any chance you should see old Mr. Hawkins to-morrow, follow him, and let the other game go, for it is an unimportant affair—a case of burglary—while I have something else on hand of far more importance. Meet me here again to-morrow evening, and do your best to hear more news."

"I will do so if possible," answered Butts, as he turned to leave the room. "By the way," he remarked, as some thought entered his mind, "I nearly forgot to tell you something; you remember Jerry Williams that you had sent up for passing counterfeit money, and who broke jail? Well, he will not cause any one any further trouble on this earth, for I saw his body fished out of the East River to-day. I suppose he got drunk and fell overboard, so there is one rascal less in the world."

"Are you certain it was he?" asked Thompson.

"Of course I am, for I saw the long red scar on his forehead he got at that big fight of his in the bar-room, and I could tell him by that scar anywhere."

"What was done with the body?" asked the detective.

"I believe they took it to the Morgue."

"And now," said his employer, "be careful how you talk; remember your characters at the

proper time, and do not get them mixed up together. Have you money enough?"

"Plenty," was the reply.

"All right, then," said his employer; "take good care of yourself."

"I will," answered Butts; and in a moment more he was gone.

After the boy had gone, the detective sketched out a rough plan in which occurred the names of Sam Perry, Tom Jones, and Mr. Hawkins.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "I will have to let that South Carolina robbery case rest for awhile!"

For a few moments nothing disturbed the stillness of the room, but the loud scratch of his pen, as it rapidly moved over the paper.

"I guess that will do," he said, finally, as he folded the letter, sealed and addressed it.

"Sorry to keep them waiting; but the old saying is, 'an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure,' and it applies in this case." So saying, he threw aside the letter, and throwing himself upon the bed, he was soon sound asleep.

CHAPTER V.

A MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

WILLIAM WILSON passed the best part of the night in arranging his effects, so that he might be enabled to leave at any moment.

So intent was he with his packing, that he did not see the eyes of a stranger, who was peering through the blinds.

The person to whom the eyes belonged was crouched upon a long balcony, which ran along the whole row of houses, in one of which Wilson boarded, and was about ten feet from the ground.

The man who was so closely watching Wilson was a thick-set fellow, whose face was half covered by a mask, and whose form was enveloped in a cloak.

In fact, it was no less than Tom Jones, whom Sam Perry had met in Brooklyn the night before.

Finally, Wilson had arranged his things to his satisfaction, and lying down upon the lounge, he lay for a long while in thought; finally, however, worn out with his day's exertions, he dropped off to sleep.

The eyes of the watcher now lighted up with an eager expression, and waiting a little longer, to make sure that the young man was sound asleep, he commenced his operations.

The blinds through which he had been watching were fastened upon the inside; but Jones seemed to be a man well used to the business.

By means of a small saw, which was almost noiseless in its operations, he soon cut out two slats, and passing his hand through the opening, he unfastened the blind.

The night was pitchy dark, and favored his design to the utmost.

He next tried to raise the window, but that also was fastened.

Drawing from his pocket a small roll of cloth which was covered with some adhesive mixture, he pressed it against the glass, and allowed it to remain a few moments, so that it would adhere firmly, then drawing a diamond point across the pane, such as is ordinarily used by glaziers, he listened intently, to determine whether his operations had aroused the sleeper.

But the young man, tired and weary, still slept soundly.

Now, holding firmly to a corner of the cloth with one hand, with the other he pressed firmly against the pane.

It was pushed in; but the hold he retained upon the cloth prevented it from falling.

Drawing the pane of glass through again, he laid it upon the balcony.

Passing his hand through the opening, he pushed back the window fastening, and raising the window, he entered the room.

No sooner had he done so, than the window, which was without weights, and remained up while the burglar raised it, dropped heavily down, waking up Wilson with a start.

Quick as thought, he sprang from the lounge, and grappled with the intruder.

Not quite fully awake to the nature of the attack, he fought blindly.

In the midst of the struggle, the light which had been burning dimly was overturned and extinguished, and they were left in total darkness.

In vain the young man endeavored to floor his opponent; he was much too strong for him physically.

With a sudden movement, the intruder freed his arms from Wilson, and drawing a large knife, he raised it aloft, and was about to plunge it into the young man.

But Wilson had divined the intention, and catching his arm as it was descending for the blow, the knife was sent flying across the room.

Steps were now heard hurrying toward the room, and a loud, imperative knock heard upon the door.

"Open! Open!" was the cry, accompanied with heavy blows upon the panels, which threatened soon to demolish them.

"Keep quiet!" shouted William, hoarsely, for the villain's grasp was upon his throat, and his breath came hard.

"Curse you!" hissed the rascal, "I have failed; but you shall suffer!" and he drew a revolver, and fired.

With a moan, the young man fell backward, and fainted.

At the same moment, the door was burst open, and an officer sprang into the room.

Without stopping to raise the window, the burglar sprang through, carrying glass and sash through with him.

Running the length of the balcony, he threw himself over, and hanging for a moment by his hands, he dropped.

As he touched the ground, another policeman seized him by the shoulder, and two men held on to him.

"Not so fast, my beauty," said the policeman; "you might as well come along peaceably as not."

"All right," gruffly answered Jones; "I surrender to superior numbers."

The two men let go, thinking that the policeman could take charge of him alone.

But no sooner were their hands off of him when he suddenly jerked himself clear of the policeman's grasp, and giving him a tremendous blow on the head with the butt end of his revolver, he darted off.

Another man grasped him by the shoulder and detained him, but for an instant only, for the wretch, placing his revolver against the man's breast, fired, and he dropped.

No one was before him now, but the whole crowd was at his heels, and no time was to be lost.

Darting down the street with the rapidity of a deer, he soon reached a large lumber-yard which stood close to the river.

The crowd was now close after him, screaming: "Catch the murderer! catch the murderer!"

They were fast gaining upon him.

In vain he looked for some place which might offer a safe hiding-place; but he could see none.

The crowd had spread out as they reached the yard, and he knew it would be useless to attempt to get out again, while every moment the cries of his pursuers sounded nearer.

Finally a bright thought entered his mind, and he immediately put it in execution.

At the head of the dock, and close to the edge, stood a large and high lumber pile; the ends of the lumber were of uneven length, and using them for steps, Jones quietly clambered to the top, and lay down flat upon it, with his eyes over the edge, to watch the movements of those below.

The moon had now come out, and by its faint gleam he could see the shadowy forms of his pursuers darting hither and thither among the lumber in their search for him.

He chuckled to himself as he watched them, to think how cleverly he had outwitted them, and taking some cartridges from his pocket, he loaded the empty chambers of his revolver.

The crowd below had increased alarmingly, and by the vigorous manner in which they conducted the search, seemed fully determined not to let him escape them again.

A small knot of them gathered at the foot of the pile on which Jones lay, and discussed the ways and means best adapted to discover the fugitive.

"Tell yer wot it is, Bill," said a rough-looking fellow to his companion, "that feller was a buffer, and no mistake; blamed if he didn't do some tall traveling down this way."

The villain above them grinned maliciously.

"Three men as good as killed," said another speaker.

"I don't see where he could have gone to," added another; "but we will never find him if we stand here talking all night."

Suddenly one of them exclaimed:

"Perhaps he is on top of some of these lumber piles."

"S'pose yer climb up then an' see," said the first speaker.

"All right," was the reply; "and look out he don't get away when I tell you which pile he is on;" and he laughed, and commenced the ascent.

Slowly he mounted. Not dreaming of the possibility of the fugitive being on top of that pile, he looked for no danger.

As his head appeared over the top, he felt the cold muzzle of a pistol pressed against his temple, while a voice, whose earnestness he did not for a moment doubt, whispered in his ear:

"Speak but one word, an' I will blow yer brains out! I'm desperate!"

The man knew by the events of the last hour that he meant what he said, so he made no reply, but clambered over the edge, and stood on top.

"Now, kin yer swim?" asked Jones, gruffly.

"Yes," said the man, turning pale. "Why?"

"Well, it is a good thing fur yer, otherwise yer might be drowned;" and he grinned horribly.

"Now," he continued, "I've no objections to tell yer wot I am going to do. I will give yer just one minnit to jump overboard in, and when yer jump, I will holler 'there he goes,' and they will think it is me, and will grab you, and while they are busy pullin' you out, I will get clear."

"Now, ready," he said, drawing a watch from his pocket with his left hand, while with his right he held the revolver at the other's head. Jump before I count ten. Now; one—two—three—four—

The man looked into Jones's face, and seeing he could hope for no mercy, he glanced over the edge of the lumber into the water beneath, and just as the villain uttered five, he sprang off.

"Catch him! catch him!" shouted Jones, looking over the edge, and waving his hand to the spot where the man had disappeared.

The crowd, thinking it was the man they were in search of, rushed to the end of the dock, to seize him when he should come to the surface.

Taking advantage of his opportunity, the villain descended the pile, and stole away unperceived.

The crowd at last succeeded in hauling the poor fellow out, and would have handled him roughly, when suddenly one of the men recognized him as the man who had ascended the lumber to look for the murderer.

Finally the man recovered his breath enough to gasp out:

"On top of the pile—the murderer!"

"Duped!" yelled the crowd, in a breath.

Several mounted the lumber to find it vacant, and they slowly dispersed, cursing their luck.

Meanwhile, the murderer had passed up to the fourth dock above, and pulling a small boat from its hiding-place underneath the dock, he took to the oars, and was soon far out in the stream, and shooting down the river.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNTERFEITERS' DEN.

THE next day, Sam Perry was proceeding leisurely up Broadway; and though he seemed to be indifferent to surrounding objects, yet a close observer would have known that he was ill at ease.

"I wonder," he muttered to himself, uneasily, "if Tom was successful last night in obtaining the papers. Curse that Wilson; what does he want to cross my path for, and how did he come to get the documents from Hawkins?"

He had now reached City Hall Square, and crossing it, he dropped into a small restaurant in Park Row, and called for some refreshment.

While waiting for them to be brought to him, he took up the *Herald* to see the news, until suddenly a paragraph arrested his attention, and he perused it eagerly.

It ran as follows:

"ATTEMPTED ROBBERY AND MURDER.—About twelve o'clock last night a attempt was made by some unknown person to rob the premises No. — West Twenty-ninth Street. Being awake by the robber's entrance through the window, one of the boarders attempted to seize him. The robber drew a knife upon him, but being disarmed, he fired at the young man, inflicting a wound which it is feared will prove fatal. A policeman who attempted to stop his flight, was shot dead, and another one severely wounded. The murderer escaped, but the

police are upon his track and are confident of success."

Perry read this paragraph over twice; then he laid the paper down with an oath, muttering: "I'll bet anything he did not get the papers, after all his fighting; but he knew better than to be caught after what I told him last night. I guess he would not be so frightened if he knew that Hawkins was still alive; but it's not likely that he will ever find that out, for even I have lost sight of where he is now."

A few minutes later and a newsboy brought in a letter, and without saying a word, he handed it to Perry.

"How did you know my name?" asked Sam, suspiciously.

"Well, boss, the feller wot giv it ter me tell'd me wot sort of a chap yer was."

Sam eyed the boy sharply, but he stood with his hands in his pockets, and dull, sleepy-looking eyes, not half as bright-looking as the ordinary run of newsboys, and he was satisfied.

Slipping a quarter in the boy's palm, he bid him be off.

He then turned to the window to read the note.

It was written in a scrawly hand, and ran as follows:

"Mr. P.—Am in grate danger. Be keerful yer ain't follered to-night. Burn this up wen yer read it. Yours truly, Tom."

"Curse him! I expect his blundering work will get me in trouble if I am not careful. He must have been watching me this morning or he would not have known I was here. Very well; they can't say that they saw Sam Perry come out of the saloon, anyhow."

Taking from his pocket a pair of spectacles, he put them on, then paying his bill, he started up the steps to the street level.

At the foot of the stairs he stumbled, seemingly accidentally, but when he straightened himself up again, a heavy beard completely disguised him, and he might have been taken for a full-blooded Englishman.

He then crossed the park, and started up Broadway.

Had he looked behind him, he might have seen that the newsboy was closely following him.

It was our young friend, Butts, who had chanced to be near when Jones saw Perry, and who had been commissioned to carry the note.

The name Perry reminded him of the man whom he had heard Thompson speak so often about; and he determined, after seeing him, to follow him up for a short space of time, and learn the result.

He had not been deceived by Perry's disguise, for he understood such dodges, and he had taken in Perry's general appearance at a glance, and could not mistake him.

He was walking along, in a careless sort of manner, stopping every now and then to look in a window; but still keeping the same distance to the rear of Perry, and never once losing sight of him in the crowd.

Upon reaching Canal Street, Perry turned down toward West Street.

As they reached the corner of West Broadway and Canal, Butts noticed a tall, pale-looking lady suddenly start as she saw Perry, and, after a moment's hesitation, she started on after him.

"Well, here's a go," said Butts, to himself; "wonder wot's in the wind now;" and without losing sight of Perry, Butts stole an earnest glance at the face of the woman.

She seemed to be about thirty-five years of age; tall, and with hair of raven blackness.

An expression of much mental suffering had marred the regular outlines of her features.

She seemed indifferent to surrounding objects; only anxious to keep the man in view, as if to speak to him, when they got out of the crowd.

Reaching West Street, Perry turned up, still tracked by the woman and newsboy.

In crossing Houston Street, the woman's foot slipped, and she fell directly in front of a team of horses.

The driver of the team reined up his animals just in time to save her from being trampled to death.

Butts sprang to her rescue, but she had fainted; and they bore her tenderly to the nearest drug store.

Upon examination, it was found that her ankle was badly sprained by the fall; and she was told that it would necessitate that she

should remain quiet for three weeks, at least, if not much longer.

Upon being told this, she appeared greatly agitated, and moaned pitifully.

A carriage was now brought, and giving the driver her instructions, she was assisted into it and driven off.

Meanwhile, the newsboy, after assisting to carry the pale lady to the druggist's, had immediately run back to find Perry again; but after running a long distance, and seeing nothing of him, he gave the search up in despair, and returned to the druggist's.

By that time the lady had gone away in the carriage, and the druggist knew nothing of the direction she had taken; those who had assisted her into the carriage had departed, and the newsboy, thoroughly disgusted at the manner in which he had lost his game, started back in the same direction from which he had first come.

Perry, meanwhile, unaware of all that had been transpiring behind him, proceeded rapidly along some five blocks further, till he came to a low, dilapidated frame house which stood on a corner, and which was occupied as a liquor store, and kept by a hag old and frightfully ugly.

As Sam entered the place, the old woman started up from her seat behind the counter with alacrity, exclaiming:

"Good-afternoon to yez, Mither Burney; an' I was jist wondering flat had become of yez; how is yer blissid hilt?"

"Oh, first rate," answered Sam, laughing; "and how are the boys?"

"Shure, they are all right," said the old hag, with a grin; "some of thim are in the mill, and some haven't come in yet."

"All right," said Sam; and passing into the rear room, he pushed back a panel in the wall, disclosing to view a flight of stone steps which led into a cellar.

Descending these, he turned to the right, and stood before what seemed to be the foundation wall of the house.

Stooping, he felt along till he touched a spring, when the seemingly solid wall flew back, disclosing another opening—a long, narrow passage-way.

On stepping into the passage, the door slammed to after him, leaving no trace of its existence as a door.

Groping along the passage, Sam, or Burney, (as we shall call him, in this capacity, for by that name he was known in that place), groped his way till he came to another door. Here Burney gave a peculiar rap, upon which a small wicket was opened, and a voice demanded who came. "Le Capitaine" was the answer, accompanied with some other words in a low tone; and presently the heavy iron door swung open.

A general exclamation of: "How are ye, cap," greeted him as he entered the place.

It was a low, underground place, that looked as if it might have once served for vaults, as no doubt it had.

Seated around a long table, in the center of the room, were about eight or ten of the most villainous faces that could be found in a day's walk. Before them were numerous tools, dies, presses, stamps, engravers' materials, and in fact everything that was necessary in carrying out their nefarious business; while upon one end of the table lay a pile of bank-notes.

They were an organized band of counterfeiters, of whom Burney was the head or chief.

"What news, boys?" asked Burney, as he threw himself in a chair and lighted a cigar.

"Well," replied a big, burly-looking fellow, who seemed to be in charge in the chief's absence, "I am afraid that they are follerin' us up pretty close; if it hadn't bin for quietin' a cop with two hundred of the real stuff, I would have bin nabbed sure to-day; I told him that I got it from a tailor, whom I did not know, so he let me off. Ha! ha!" he laughed. "I bet he will try to pass it himself."

"By the way," broke in another speaker. "I heard to-day that Gus Thompson, the detective, is in the city, and trying to discover our gang; I don't know how true it is."

"The devil!" exclaimed Perry.

"I think you are mistaken, Phil," said another; "for I heard as how he was on another lay, something about some bonds as was stole in Savannah some years ago."

"How much valyer?" asked one.

"Somewhere about eighty thousand dollars' worth," said the other; "and they say that Thompson knows who took them, and is watching for them."

The chief seemed very uneasy while this conversation was carried on, but said, finally:

"I guess, boys, we'll have to keep quiet for some time, till we find out if we are really shadowed."

He now arose, and passing to a large iron safe which stood in one corner, he opened it, and drew forth a large roll of genuine notes. He divided them equally among the men, telling them to go on with their work; but to use no more of the "queer" till he gave them further orders. Then, giving a few extra instructions to his lieutenant, he arose, and bidding the boys good-bye, he started off for the rendezvous, where had had promised to meet Tom Jones.

CHAPTER VII.

A PROPOSED VISIT.

MATTIE passed the next day after her lover's departure very melancholy indeed.

Seated by the window, in an attitude of deep thought, she passed the greater part of the day.

Finally she was roused by the servant's knock upon the door, and bidding her enter, the girl handed her a note, which she said had just been brought.

Glancing at the superscription, she recognized it as William's handwriting. Tearing it open, she soon mastered its contents.

Wilson said in the note that he had been slightly injured the night before in an encounter with a burglar, but nothing at all serious; and not to be alarmed by any news she might see in the papers.

There was much more in the note—lovers' talk such as we all deal in some time in our lives, and ending up by saying that "circumstances would prevent him from seeing her before he left on his trip, but to keep up her spirits till she heard from him again," and signing himself, "your own William."

Mattie read the letter through twice, and derived much comfort from its tone, but the allusion to the wound made her quite anxious; for knowing that he might fear to tell her all the particulars, she was alarmed lest he might be much worse than he represented himself in his note.

Hearing a knock at the door, she hastily thrust the note in her pocket, and Mr. Templeton entered the room.

Seating himself by her side, and taking her small hand in his own, he said:

"I fear my Mattie is unwell; is it not so?" he asked, anxiously.

"I am not in the best of spirits," faltered Mattie.

The father's heart failed him as he looked at her pale features, and he said, presently:

"I must send you off in the country for a short time, and see if the fresh breezes will not bring the roses back again to your cheeks."

And he tapped them playfully as he spoke. "Oh!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "I forgot to tell you. I heard that my young friend Wilson was severely hurt last night."

Mattie asked for the particulars, but her father knew no more about the matter than she did herself.

"I understand," he continued, "that he intends to go upon his trip to Savannah, the same as if nothing had occurred. I admire his pluck. The police are on the track of the burglar, but I much doubt whether they will be able to secure him. I suppose he must have been after the money that William is about to take out with him. If they catch the scoundrel I hope they will try him for murder."

"What?" asked Mattie, in an alarmed tone.

"Why, yes," said the father, "he shot a policeman in escaping, and instantly killed him."

Mattie drew a deep sigh of relief.

"I have been informed by my young friend Perry," continued Mr. Templeton, "that he is obliged to leave the city, to be gone some time. And as two of our best friends will be gone now, I desire that you should go in the country to spend a short time. Now where do you want to go, my daughter?" he asked.

"I should like very much to visit Cousin Green's, in Rhode Island," she answered. "You know I have not been there now for nearly six years, and I should dearly love to see the old place again."

And Mattie's eye lighted up in anticipation of the pleasure she should derive from a visit to her cousin, Lucy Green, who had always been to her a dear friend and sister.

Mattie's father approved of her choice, saying, as he kissed his daughter and rose to leave the room, "I must now retire to my library. Mattie, and I shall write directly to Cousin Lucy, and tell her you will be on there soon to visit her. So you may get your clothing and whatever other articles you will need in readiness."

As he reached the door, he turned and said: "Mr. Perry is to call this evening. As it is to be the last he will spend in the city before he leaves us, I hope you will make yourself as agreeable to him as you did the other evening, for Sam is a fine young fellow." So saying, he left the room.

Mattie sat silently thinking.

"At least," she thought, "I shall be free from the attentions of Sam Perry after to-night." And in the seclusion of Cousin Green's house she would be enabled to pass the time comparatively easy until the time when William should return for her.

Then her mind went castle-building, and a vision of a bright home and a happy life, to be spent with William, arose in her mind.

She was roused from her brief reverie by a servant announcing Mr. Perry, and a moment afterward Sam entered, bowing politely, and extending his hand.

"Good-evening, Miss Templeton," he said, "I hope I find you well, but you are looking quite pale," he exclaimed, after a closer glance at her features.

"I am slightly indisposed," she answered, coldly.

"I am very sorry to hear it," he said; and then they relapsed into silence, broken only at intervals by some slight remark. It was evident that Sam Perry had something which rested heavily upon his mind to the exclusion of lighter matters.

Finally, as if by an effort, Perry drew his chair closer to that on which Mattie was seated, and began:

"Miss Templeton, or Mattie, if you will allow me to call you by that name, I beg you will listen for a few moments to what I have to say."

Mattie, fearing the result of his preliminary speech, would have restrained him, but seizing hold of her hand, he went on rapidly:

"In the length of time in which I have known you, Mattie, I have felt a more than ordinary feeling of interest in you, which feeling has been gradually growing stronger until it has ripened into the deepest love for you. May I ask, may I hope, that it has not been in vain?" he said, fixing his black, piercing eyes full upon her.

If his intention had been to bring her will into subjection with his own, he had failed, for the very horror of the proposition had awakened every faculty of Mattie's, as she replied coldly:

"Mr. Perry, I have always considered you as a dear friend of my father, and am very sorry that you should ever have been led to regard me in any other light but that of a friend, for more than that I can never be to you; let this answer suffice you."

"Is your decision irrevocable?" asked Perry, his eyes flashing as he noted the cool manner of the girl.

"It is," was the simple answer.

"May I ask, if it be not deemed impertinent, if you love another?" he asked, cuttingly.

Her cheeks flushed as she replied: "Your question, sir, is highly impertinent, but I will answer it. I do love another, and even were it not so, it would make no difference in the answer which I have given you."

"So be it, then," exclaimed Perry, in a meaning tone; "you have rejected me; go on with your love. Marry Wilson (if he lives to return," he muttered under his breath, "and settle down to a life of poverty."

"Enough," interrupted Mattie; "you have said too much already; and only my forced respect for one who calls himself my father's friend prevents me from having you forcibly removed from this house. Now go!" and she pointed to the door.

"Very well," he said, scowling darkly as he spoke, "this is your hour of triumph; but mine will yet come, remember, and when that time does come, do not blame me for being as domineering in manner as you are now yourself. For the present, I bid you adieu," and with a mocking bow to Mattie, he closed the door behind him, and departed.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUTTS MAKES A REPORT.

THOMPSON was seated in his room on the next evening, busily engaged in thought. His endeavors to find a trace of Perry the day before had proved unsuccessful; but one thing he had discovered, and that was one of the stolen bonds which had been identified by him. It had been sold to a broker who had not noticed the number until the man had gone, when his clerk called his attention to it as one of the lot that had been advertised as stolen.

He described the person who sold it to him as a man of medium height, dark complexion and heavy beard, and who looked as if he was recently from a southern climate. He also described him as having a peculiarly restless pair of black eyes.

Thompson had remained in the vicinity of the broker's office for the entire day; but as the man did not call again, he returned to his lodgings that night considerably out of humor with himself and the world in general.

"I might have known," he growled, "that the fellow would not come back to the same place again; but if he was from the South, as the broker said, perhaps he did not know the bonds had been advertised."

Presently a loud rap at the door announced the arrival of our friend Butts.

Upon entering the room, he threw himself lazily into the chair he had occupied before, and waited for Thompson to speak.

It was one of the boy's peculiarities that he never volunteered the information he possessed, but always required to be questioned to bring out the facts in his possession.

"Well!" growled Thompson, presently, "why don't you say something?"

"Wait'n' for you to ax me," he replied, in his slang way of speaking, "and wot do yer want to know fust; look as if yer might be out of humor, guv'nor."

"Never mind how I look," growled the detective interrupting him; "what I want to know is, what luck have you had to-day; did you find Mr. Hawkins?"

"No," returned Butts; "but I will tell you exactly how I passed the day: first I went down to the pier where they had fished up the body of Jerry Williams, to see if I could learn any more particulars; but there was no one around that knew anything about it."

"Just as I was coming away, I chanced to look down at my feet (I was standing where the body had lain the day before), and I picked up from between the planks this;" and he produced an old diary which was saturated with salt water, and gave it to Thompson, who took it, merely saying, "Go on with your story."

"Well," continued the boy, "I suppose it must have been dropped from his pocket while they were moving him away, and they did not notice it. Well, I next went up Beekman Street to City Hall, when a rough looking fellow tapped me on the shoulder, and asked me if I wanted to make a quarter; of course I told him yes, and then he gave me a letter to be given to a man that he said I would find in a restaurant in Park Row. The fellow seemed to be afraid of being watched, or something, for he kept gazing around him and watching every one that came near him."

"I started across the street before I remembered that I had not been informed as to the man's name or what sort of man he was; then I thought of the letter in my hand, and to my surprise I found it was for—who do you think?"

"I don't choose to think," said Thompson, quickly; "go on."

"Well," answered Butts, "it was Sam Perry."

"The devil!" ejaculated the detective, starting from his chair.

"Yes, I suppose he is," said the boy; "but I didn't happen to see his horns; however, I recognized him in a moment, for I have heard of him and seen him before to-day."

"Well, I gave him the note, and he looked at me pretty sharp as he asked me where I got it. I told him, then he gave me a half a dollar, and I left him."

"What next?" asked the detective, impatiently.

"If you give me time, I will tell you," replied the boy. "I waited till he came out, and I nearly missed him, for he had disguised his face in a heavy beard and eyeglasses, and if it had not been that I took particular attention to his dress, he would have slipped me, but I fol-

lowed him. When we got as far as Canal and West Broadway, a pale lady also tracked him."

And Butts went on to narrate the facts connected with her, which are already known to the reader.

Thompson rapidly dotted down a short-hand, the boy's account.

Butts finally came to that part of the account where he described the manner in which he had lost trace of both of them.

"Well," said the detective, who was now in a much better humor, "I am sorry that you lost them; but you have done pretty well for one day, for I have got a clew by which I may be able to follow up my search. But I'm hanged if matters are not getting more and more complicated. I wonder who holds the clew, for I should like to find that person."

Then, turning to the boy, he said: "I want you to do your best to-morrow to find out where any one of these parties is living. I am not particular as to which one it is, for I think if I get hold of one I will be able to succeed in unraveling the mystery, and lay bare the whole plot, whatever it may be."

"And now, Butts," he said earnestly to the boy, "if we succeed in this job, it will be the making of you. I have strong hopes that you will one of these days, and that day not far distant, make a first-class detective. And I shall do all in my power to help you along."

"Thank you, guv'nor," replied the boy; "I shall do my best;" and his eyes lighted up with professional pride.

"Now," said the detective, as he rose to bring the interview to an end, "lest you should be in danger, and need a friend, take this;" and he took from the drawer a small Smith & Wesson revolver. "Be careful how you use it, and never take a life, except in self-defense. Should you be taken into custody by any means, send a line to me, and you will instantly be released. And now, good-night;" and bidding him to call again as soon as he could report progress, they parted.

After the boy had gone, Thompson sat for some time thinking over what he had just heard.

Then he opened the diary, which was thoroughly soaked with water, and after much difficulty he succeeded in deciphering the last entry, which was as follows:

"I fear that Perry will kill me one of these days; he threatened me that he would if I made myself known in the city; he seems to be afraid that I will tell the truth about old Hawkins. I told him that if I was missed that I had left papers with a certain party in Savannah that would tell the whole truth. But I do not think he believed me, for he did not look as if he did. Then I got mad, and I told him that I knew his secret; and if ever I saw a man angry in my life, Perry was then. I was almost afraid he would kill me on the spot. He cooled down finally, and then we went to a place in South Street, and took a drink together; then—" but the rest was so blurred by the action of the water, that the detective could not decipher it.

"I shall make something out of this, anyhow," he said to himself as he carefully closed the book, and placed it in a small safe that stood in his room.

"Now, I wonder who the pale lady was that Butts spoke about, and what she could have known about, or wanted with Perry. That is more than I can see through. If I only knew where she could be found, I would soon satisfy myself on that head, anyhow."

"But I have one consolation; this is the hardest job that I ever undertook to unravel, and if I succeed, why, the better will be my reputation when it is done. But I don't know how I should have succeeded if it had not been for the boy's assistance; he is indeed an invaluable aid to me."

CHAPTER IX.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

AFTER leaving the den of the gang, Perry started for the rendezvous where he was to meet Jones. As he walked along he mused upon the events of the last few days.

"Well, I have got one off my hands," he muttered, savagely. "It was his own fault, though; he should not have told me he knew so much; but I should really like to know if there is any truth about the papers that he said were in Savannah?" and his brow darkened as he thought of it.

It was now nearly one o'clock in the morn-

ing, two hours after the boy had left the detective to return home, for he lived in the city.

Perry now quickened his pace, as if he were anxious to rid himself of the gloomy thoughts which would intrude upon him in spite of all he could do to prevent them.

Following him silently like a shadow was the figure of a boy making his way cautiously after him.

It was Butts, who had accidentally sighted him after he had left the den, and who recognized him instantly.

Finally Perry arrived at a house seemingly unoccupied. The blinds were off, the front door hung by a single hinge, and in fact the whole house was rapidly falling into decay.

Passing up a rickety flight of stairs, which creaked dismally beneath his feet, he finally reached the top, and giving a peculiar tap upon the door, it swung open, and the voice of Tom Jones called to him to "come in."

He was greatly changed in his appearance from what he had been on the night when Perry first met him, and would hardly have been known as the man who had such a short time before been engaged in such a desperate conflict.

His eyes were sunk far back in his head, as if he had known no sleep for a week back; and his restless eye and anxious look showed him to be in a state of great mental anxiety.

Perry noted all this as his eye rested upon him; and taking a chair, he sat down.

Meanwhile, Butts had quietly stole past, and seeing that the room next to that in which Perry had gone was open, he stole in.

Jones, after seeing that the door of his room was securely fastened, drew his chair close to that of Perry's.

"Are you sure there is no one near to hear us?" asked Sam.

"Yes," returned Jones; "for there is no one lives in this house;" but a certain fear seized him as he spoke, for he next said: "I guess I will go and take a look anyhow, and be positive."

Butts had overheard this conversation, and was prepared for the result. Slipping behind the door, which stood open, he placed his hand upon the revolver, ready for instant use, and waited.

Jones merely glanced in the room, which was faintly lighted by the moonlight, and apparently satisfied that everything was all right, he slammed the door to, and returned to Sam Perry.

Butts was rejoiced that he had escaped so easily, and he was now doubly safe; for they were unaware of his proximity, and the door could not be opened again without giving him timely warning and allowing him again to get out of sight.

"Everything's all right," said Jones, as he again entered. "No one would suspect that any person would enter this house at this time of the night; and if they did I fancy they would meet with a warm reception if they attempted to intrude."

He grinned as he took his seat.

He now proceeded to give Perry all the particulars of his adventure, and of its unsuccessful termination.

"You see," he began, in a confidential tone, every word of which was plainly audible to the listener in the next room, "I got into the room where the young fellow was sleeping, and was about looking for the papers, when the unfounded sash fell, and the young fellow woke up, and tackled me. I would soon have got the best of him, but the light was knocked over and went out. The young fellow yelled so loud, finally, that I tried to quiet him with the knife, but he knocked that out of my hand, and then I fired upon him."

"Did you kill him?" interrupted Perry, eagerly.

"I don't know," said Jones, "but he dropped very sudden;" and then he described his exciting escape, which the reader remembers.

"Well," said Perry, after a long pause, in which he seemed to be thinking, "I heard to-day that the police are upon your track, and I suppose the best thing that you can do at present will be to leave the city until this affair blows over."

Jones nodded assent to this proposition, for he had been thinking the same thing himself.

"I shall want you to go to Savannah, for I have a small job on hand there that must be attended to as soon—"

"What's that?" he exclaimed, as the noise of falling mortar was heard in the next room.

"I s'pose it's rats," answered Jones, coolly; "lots of them here, run over a fellow while he's asleep; but I'd rather have them around than the 'cops;' they would not let me rest so quietly."

"Now, tell me all the particulars of the job I am to take in hand; where's the money to come from, and how much?"

"There is two hundred," said Perry, drawing that amount from his pocket and giving it to his companion; "when you have finished the job we will talk about the rest. When you get there, write to this direction," and he gave him a card.

"So you are not going to stay in the city," said Jones, as he took the card and glanced at the directions.

"No," replied Sam, with a forced laugh; "things are becoming too warm for me here just at present, so I am going to rusticate for awhile."

"Well," said Jones, "I am all ready to go in the next steamer that sails. And now, what am I to get in case I am successful in this job?"

"Five thousand dollars," was the reply.

"In good money?" asked the villain, eagerly.

"Yes."

"And in case I fail, what then?"

"You are to know of no such word as fail; if you do, then beware," and he flashed a glance at him full of meaning.

For a moment Jones seemed to be cowed, but only for a moment; then he leaned toward his companion, and whispered: "If you should do that, I would reveal your secret;" and he leaned forward and whispered a few words in Perry's ear.

Sam leaped to his feet, and his hand sought his pocket in search of some weapon.

"None of that," said Jones; and with the rapidity of thought he drew his own revolver, and there they stood, each covered by the other's weapon.

"You see," said Jones, "that is a game that two can play at; but you need have no fear, for I shall do nothing unless you yourself force me to it. So put up your shooter, and let's talk reasonable."

Perry fingered his revolver nervously, but finally concluded to do as Jones had said, and put the weapon back in his pocket.

Jones did the same.

They then entered into details of the intended trip, and finally Perry rose to go.

At the same time the form of Butts glided noiselessly by the door and out into the street.

Perry passed out, and walked rapidly away in the darkness till he reached the Metropolitan and passed directly to his room.

Butts was close behind him; but as he came into the light he could scarcely be known by his own employer, so completely had he changed his identity.

If any persons had been watching him, they would not have had the least suspicion that he was tracking any one; his eyes had a sleepy, vacant look, and his walk was that of one thoroughly tired or lazy.

He stumbled on carelessly after he had seen Perry disappear in his room, and as he passed, gave a quick, sharp glance at the number, and lazily sauntered by and out again into the street.

"Well," exclaimed Butts, after he had reached the street and resumed his ordinary gait, "the gov'nor can't say but that I have been of some use this time. Lucky I spotted him as I did, or I would have missed much valuable information;" and his face expanded into a broad grin of satisfaction.

"S'pose I must make a report this morning; but I'm dreadful sleepy;" and he rubbed his eyes as if to assure himself of the fact.

As he did so, not seeing where he was going, he ran against an old white-haired man with considerable violence.

Butts was about to make use of some strong expressions of his opinion of the other's carelessness; but seeing only an old person before him, he checked himself and said:

"Beg yer pardin, old man; but I did not see you."

"'Tis partly my own fault," said the old man, in a trembling voice that denoted the extreme age of the speaker; "but my eyes are not so strong as they used to be when I was of your own age. I know you did not mean it, so let's shake hands and go our own ways."

Butts held out his hand, while his face expressed the wonder he felt at such a request, and they shook hands.

As they did so, Butts gave a hasty, suppressed exclamation of surprise, at the same time peering closer in the old man's face as he said:

"Why, gov'nor! who would have thought of seeing you here, and in that disguise?"

"Hush!" said the detective, for it was indeed he; "say nothing here, but let us step into one of these private supper rooms, where we can talk without the danger of being overheard."

After a short search, they soon found one, and giving their orders, they waited until they should be served before entering upon their conversation.

Butts was turning over in his mind the thoughts as for what business had brought his master over on that night. And as he glanced across the table at the old, feeble-looking person opposite, he could hardly reconcile himself to the fact that it was indeed Thompson.

"Well," said Butts to himself, in an undertone, "he knows the grip, so it must be the gov'nor, anyway."

At this moment the voice of the old man was heard as he said:

"Well, nephew, and how is your mother, and how have all the folks been to home since I was here before?"

Butts caught the cue from him, and answered accordingly, for the waiter was there, arranging the table.

Finally they were left alone.

CHAPTER X.

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE.

WHEN Wilson fell from the shot of Jones, he had not been mortally wounded by any means.

The ball had struck him in the fleshy part of his arm, and passed clean through it.

He was then raised up, and placed upon the bed, while a physician was immediately sent for.

Presently he came; and after examining the wound, and skillfully binding it up, he left, after telling Wilson that it would soon be all right again, providing he did not exercise his arm too much for the present.

The young man's effects were already packed, and he ordered an express sent for, to convey them to the steamer, which was to sail that day.

He then seated himself at his desk, and dispatched a parting note to Mattie, bidding her be of good cheer till he again returned home.

After sealing and directing this, he drew forth from his desk a packet of folded papers; and untying the string that bound them, he spread one open upon the desk. It read as follows:

"This is to certify that on the twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty, George Sinclair, of New York City, and Clara Studley, of Savannah, were by me joined in the holy bands of matrimony.

(Signed) "J. C. HAWKINS."
"JEREMIAH WILLIAMS, }
"THOMAS JONES. } Witnesses."

The document bore the marks of age, and the letters were difficult to decipher.

"I wonder!" exclaimed Wilson, softly, to himself, "why this paper was left in my charge, and what could have ever become of the old man who placed so much confidence in me as to place these sealed packages in my possession, and authorized me to break the seal if I did not hear from him in six months from the time he gave me the documents."

"Well," he continued, thoughtfully, "the time has nearly expired, and no news of him yet; but I am wasting valuable time when I should be preparing for departure."

So saying, he turned his attention to his business letters.

The night was far advanced ere he folded and sealed his papers, and carefully collecting them, he placed them in a small safe which stood in the room, and locking the door, he retired to rest.

The next morning he awoke, much refreshed both in mind and body.

The steamer was to sail that day, and after settling his board, and bidding his landlady farewell, he took a coach, and was driven down to the steamer.

Securing a passage, and seeing his baggage was safely on board, Wilson strolled up to Broadway, and crossing over to South Street, he proceeded to the office of Perkins & Jones, his employers.

They received him cordially, and expressed much anxiety as to the condition of the wound he had received from the burglar.

After informing them that he had received but a slight scratch, and that it would in no manner interfere with his proposed journey, he spent a considerable time in listening to their plans and instructions.

It was now one o'clock, and the steamer was to leave at half past two.

Mr. Jones proposed going with Wilson to see him off.

Arriving at the steamer, a scene met them which is familiar to travelers.

Whistles were blowing—cabmen shouting, and truck-drivers quarrelling, interspersed with the creaking of blocks and rattling of chains.

At last the hubbub gradually ceased.

The last bale had been hoisted on board. The wheels were turning, and the steamer was only held to her dock by a few strong cables.

At last the bell rang to start, the lines were cast off, the last adieus were said. Friends were separated, perhaps, for aught they knew, never to meet again in this life.

And slowly the noble vessel moved out from her dock.

Then arose the cheers of the friends on shore, answered by the waving of her pocket-handkerchiefs from those on the deck of the steamer.

Young Wilson stood aft, waving his hand to his employer on the dock.

Then he saw him become suddenly agitated, and then, with an exclamation of pain, he dropped on the dock.

Then he saw a gentleman assist him to his feet, and he could see no more, for they were rapidly lost to sight.

Wilson stood in the same fixed position for a long time after they had left the dock.

His thoughts were busy endeavoring to account for his employer's manner.

Finding no explanation, he concluded it must have been an apoplectic fit, and dismissing the subject from his mind, he went below into the cabin.

Since the moment the steamer started, a man of ugly visage had been closely watching Wilson, and heedless of any one else.

It was the face of this man that had caused the merchant's excitement.

"Well," he muttered, "hang me if I like this business! He's a nice young fellow, and I hate to have anything to do with the job—but five thousand is a good round sum of money, eh, Tom?" he chuckled to himself.

"But," he added, "how I am to do anything before we get to Savannah, is more than I can see into; however, I'll try."

So, discussing the subject in his own mind, he walked forward, and was soon chatting with one of the crew.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY.

THE lady having recovered her consciousness in the drug store, ordered the coachman to drive to No. — West Twenty-sixth Street, a few doors below Eighth Avenue.

She was soon driven there, and, amid the wondering gaze of those who had gathered around the carriage to see what was the matter, she was carried into the house.

As she was assisted up the steps, a gentleman in the crowd, who had been unable to pass, and with idle curiosity was gazing on the scene, suddenly exclaimed, "It is—"

Checking himself as he saw the wondering looks of the crowd fastened on him, he added, "It is a friend of mine."

The crowd stood there a few moments longer, staring at the door through which the lady had disappeared, and finally coming to the conclusion that nothing further was to be seen, they dispersed.

The gentleman remained a few moments longer in a seemingly undecided state.

Once he approached the door, as if he intended to ring the bell, then changing his mind, he glanced at the number; as if to remember it, and with the air of a man who has finally come to a decision, he walked off toward Eighth Avenue.

The next morning the gentleman was again seen standing before the door.

The lady who had been injured was lying upon the lounge, and trying to pass away the time in reading, when she was interrupted by the ringing of the door bell.

Presently the girl came up with a card on which was inscribed the name "J. C. Haw-

kins," saying the gentleman wished to see her. The lady started violently as she saw the name, but with a strong effort she recovered her usual composure.

Her voice was perfectly calm as she said to the girl:

"Show him up."

In a few moments the gentleman who had uttered the exclamation the day before entered the room.

"You must excuse me from rising," she said, with a faint smile, as he bowed to her, "and—"

"No excuses are necessary, madame," he replied, as he drew a chair near to the lounge upon which she was reclining.

"I heard you had been looking for me," he said, softly, as he sat down.

"I had been," she answered, "but—"

"But you heard I was dead," he interrupted.

"Yes."

"I will explain it all to you by and by. But I would like to hear what you would have of me."

"Were you not in the city of Savannah in the year 18—"

"I was."

"Did you know a man there by the name of George Sinclair?"

"I did."

"Did you not marry him?"

He bowed in reply.

"Do you know where he may now be found?"

"I do not. Only," he added, "that I heard he was in the city. But perhaps you would like to hear my history since then."

"Very much indeed."

"Well, I will give it you. At the time I married Mr. Sinclair I was pastor of a small church in the city. One stormy night, on the 27th of February I think it was, a man called upon me and informed me that a dying man wished to see me. I never disregard a call of that kind, so I slipped on my overcoat, and left the house in company with the stranger.

"I found the man rapidly sinking, and I saw by his eye, over which the film was gathering, that his time on earth was short.

"I endeavored to lead him to think of his approaching end, and to prepare his soul for eternity, but it was of no use; he seemed to have some weighty subject on his mind which engrossed all his thoughts, and finally he said:

"I feel that I have but a short time left to live in the world, but I have a confession to make before I go."

"At that time I also held a position as justice of the peace, and I immediately drew up a formal confession for him.

"He said that he had been engaged by one George Sinclair to personate a clergyman at a mock ceremony, to be held that night, and that he was to pass as myself."

The lady groaned.

"He had fallen from a scaffold that day while at work, and was mortally wounded internally.

"Now," he said, "I want you to make that wrong right."

"How?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "it is to be a private affair, and there will be no one there. You can wait here till the carriage comes for me, and take my place. Sinclair is not a man to be balked, and if he found out that I was not coming, he would get some one else. Now, if you marry them, he will be caught in his own trap, you see."

"I thought over it for a few moments, and came to the conclusion that I would be justified in deceiving Sinclair, so I consented.

"I then proceeded to disguise myself to look as much as possible like the man I was to represent.

"He had an ugly red scar across his forehead. This I imitated by means of red chalk.

"In figure and height we were about the same.

"I intended, had I been discovered before the ceremony, to have exposed the whole plot.

"I thought once of warning the girl beforehand, but I knew human nature too well to suppose she would listen to my story, so I abandoned the idea.

"At the appointed time the carriage called with two men in it, and I was driven to the house.

"Sinclair had invented some story about being disinherited if the marriage should be known, so that the girl had consented to be

married privately; this my companions had told me while in the carriage.

"It was a dimly lighted room into which I was conducted.

"I knew Sinclair's description, and nodded to him in a careless manner as I entered.

"The ceremony was performed, and I wrote out the certificate, which was duly signed by two of the witnesses present.

"As I was leaving the house, Sinclair slipped a check in my hand, also the marriage certificate, telling me:

"It would do to light the fire with."

"The check was cashed the next day; but when I came to inquire for Sinclair, intending to tell him of the truth, and warn him not to slight his obligations, I found he had gone to New York."

"And what did you do with the certificate?" she asked, breathlessly.

"I have it, together with the dying man's confession; they are in the possession of a young friend of mine in whom I place great confidence."

"Where does that friend live?"

"In this city. I made his acquaintance shortly after I came here. I can get the papers any time I want them."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the lady, as she listened to the conclusion of the story. "Oh, sir! you have taken such a load of anxiety from my mind."

After some hesitation, she said:

"I will now give you some facts connected with my own history, and then you will see why I was so anxious to discover your whereabouts.

"For nearly a year after our marriage my husband's treatment was all that I could wish, and he seemed to love me devotedly; every wish of mine was granted, and every desire gratified. Finally his manner toward me grew cold.

"This was the source of much trouble to me, as I could think of no way in which I had offended him.

"Finally our boy was born, and I hoped that in his love for him he would again love me as of old.

"The hope was a vain one, for though he seemed to care a little for the child, yet his manner toward me was the same.

"I strove to hide my feelings as long as possible; but finally I could bear it no longer, and I begged him to tell me the cause of his coldness.

"My question enraged him, and in a fit of anger, he told me that I was not his wife, and that the ceremony was a mock one."

"When I remembered the pains he had taken both to conceal our marriage, and the way it had been performed, I was forced to believe him.

"Do you doubt that when I discovered that the man I had loved so fondly, that he in whom I had staked my confidence, life, and reputation, had proven false—can you doubt, I ask, that such treatment should nearly madden me?"

"I felt at the moment as if I could strike him dead at my feet. My hot Southern blood boiled in my veins, as I thought of all the indignities he had heaped upon me; but my boy's figure rose before me. I remembered he was his father, and I spared him."

"I determined to find out the man who had performed the ceremony.

"I had no marriage certificate, as I had not thought enough about it to get it. I had no idea that I should ever need it.

"I found that Sinclair had engaged a laboring-man to perform the ceremony, and that the man had since died.

"Who were the accomplices who acted as witnesses, I was unable to discover.

"Sinclair had indeed plotted carefully, for I was powerless to help myself.

"I think he feared, from my temperament, that he would meet with personal injury at my hands, for he shortly after disappeared, taking the child with him.

"This was the last drop in my cup of sorrow; had he left me my boy I would have been content; but I vowed that I would follow him to the end of the earth, and give him no peace till he should give me back my child.

"I will pass over the story of my troubles while in pursuit of him, only stating that he continually evaded me from time to time, and I had but accidentally caught sight of him, and was following him up, when I met with the accident that has laid me up."

"And do you know by what name he is known at present?" asked Mr. Hawkins.

"I understand that he goes by the name of Sam Perry," she replied.

Mr. Hawkins started suddenly from his seat. "The man who laid a plot to murder me!" he exclaimed.

"And has he grown so wicked," she said, with a start. "I did not think he would come to that."

"It seems," said Hawkins, without noticing the interruption, "that the man who had confessed the marriage fraud to me in Savannah did not die as soon as I expected he would."

"He rallied the next day, and hoping, as dying men will hope, that he was again getting better, he sent for Perry and explained all to him."

"Of course Perry knew he was not safe while I was living, and he kept spies upon my movements."

"He found out when I came to New York."

"One night I was coming from Brooklyn, and had nearly reached the ferry, when I was suddenly seized from behind and thrust into a carriage that stood near, and driven rapidly off."

"I attempted to cry out, but the cold muzzle of a pistol was placed to my head, and I was warned, if I valued my life, to keep a still tongue in my head."

"The night was dark and dreary."

"I tried to make out the way we were going, but the curtains of the carriage were pulled down, and we were in perfect darkness."

"I knew by the sound, however, that we were crossing the ferry, and then for some twenty minutes we rattled over the rough pavement of the city."

"At last the coach stopped."

"I was again warned to be silent, and then commanded to get out."

"They had taken the precaution to bind my hands and blindfold me, so I was helpless."

"I was then led into a house, and down a narrow flight of stairs into some damp passage, which I judged to be a cellar."

"I heard the opening of a door, and was drawn through a passage so narrow that my arms touched the sides in walking. I next heard a peculiar knock upon a door."

"A few words were spoken; what they were I could not tell, and then the cool rush of wind that followed told me that the door had been opened."

"My arms were now unpinioned, and the bandage removed from my eyes."

"I found myself in a large, airy room under ground, rudely fitted up for comfort."

"A dozen or more villainous-looking men were gazing at me from different parts of the apartment."

"In the center of the place was a large table, upon which was strewn a great number of dies, engravers' tools, etc."

"At one end was heaped a pile of bank-notes partly finished."

"I could see at a glance that I was among a gang of counterfeiters."

"The principal figure in the group was the captain."

"At a glance I recognized the man whom I had married in Savannah years before."

"It was Sinclair."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the lady.

"His keen eyes had been watching mine as I took in the contents of the room; finally he remarked:

"Well, old fellow, how do you like your surroundings? Rather secluded, are they not?"

"I did not care to answer him, so I remained silent, waiting to see what he would do next."

"He then turned to the gang, and said:

"Boys, this fellow," turning to me as he spoke, "has discovered a valuable secret of mine, and one which will affect us all more or less."

"This man holds the papers which will implicate us all."

"The man who betrayed me is dead, so he can tell no more tales. What shall we do with this one?"

"Shoot him; kill him!" cried the gang, as they advanced toward me with their knives drawn in a menacing manner."

"Hold!" cried Perry, as he threw himself before me, "I do not wish you to take his life yet. I want to get possession of the papers he holds. Besides, his carcass would be an ugly thing to get rid of."

"And he laughed sardonically."

"The men put up their weapons at Perry's command, though they still cast malicious glances upon me."

"I saw that the only way to save my life was to keep the knowledge I possessed."

"Perry, the captain of the band, seemed to think that the papers had been left in such a manner that they might be brought against him at any moment, and I allowed him to keep that belief."

"Will you deliver those papers to me if I let you go?" he asked.

"I will not," was the reply.

"Perhaps we can find a way to induce you to change your mind," he said.

"You can not," I answered. "In the first place, the papers you require are not in my possession, and if they were, what security have I that you would do as you say?"

"I will give you my word of honor," he said, briefly.

"Your word of honor!" I retorted. "You look well talking of honor after—"

"Silence!" he thundered, as he met the gaze of the men fixed on him. "Keep a civil tongue in your head while you are talking to me."

"I saw he was excited, so I did not dare exasperate him further."

"Will you tell me where the papers are?" he asked again.

"I will not. And it is useless to ask me further."

"He then ordered a couple of fellows to put me in the 'vault,' a dismal cell in the corner of the room."

"And I was pushed in and left to my own reflections, which were none of the best, I can assure you."

CHAPTER XII.

COUSIN GREEN'S.

A FEW days had passed since Mattie had bid adieu to Sam Perry, who had departed, as he said, for the West.

She had completed her preparations for her visit to Cousin Green's, and bidding farewell to her father, who had gone down to the steamer "City of Boston" to see her off, she was fairly started on her trip.

Her father had intended to accompany her and see her safely there, but circumstances occurred which rendered it imperative upon him to remain in the city.

Mattie, however, was a fearless girl, and had expressed so much confidence in being able to get through safely alone, that her father had consented, though reluctantly.

Those who have ever traveled eastward on these boats know what a splendid panorama is spread before the eye in the sail round the Battery and up the East River.

Forests of masts in seeming inextricable confusion, busy tugs plying in and out the wharves, now tugging at some ship, beside whom in size they seem but as pygmies. The ferry-boats plying ceaselessly, carrying their loads of precious humanity to and from their daily toil. All these present a sight that once seen will never be effaced from the memory. Mattie sat for a long time gazing upon the busy scene.

The steamer finally passed through Hell Gate, with its treacherous rocks and eddies, and was soon in the open sound.

The night air was growing cool, and Mattie rose to go below to the ladies' cabin.

As she rose from her chair, a voice behind her exclaimed: "Good-evening, Miss Templeton," and she turned to behold the face of Perry at her elbow.

"Why, Mr. Perry, this is quite a surprise," she said, astonished to see him there.

"You do not look as if it were a very pleasant one," he said, laughing.

"I can not say that it is."

A flash of anger lighted up the black and sparkling eyes of Perry, but she did not see it; then he resumed placidly, as if nothing had occurred to disturb his equanimity:

"Pray be seated a few moments, Miss Templeton. I have a few words to say to you."

She took a seat a little distance from him, saying:

"I await your pleasure, sir."

"Do you remember a conversation I held with you not a very long time ago?"

"I do, perfectly."

"And do you still hold to your decision?"

"Is this all you wish of me?" she said, coldly; "if so, I will leave you. I did not think you were so little of a gentleman, as to force this subject upon me again."

And she attempted to pass him.

"Let me tell you then," said he, grasping her arm forcibly, and speaking with a low,

rapid tone of voice that had in it much of deep meaning. "I have tried to win you in an honorable manner, and you refused to listen: now remember this: I swear that you shall become my wife. I will not see you become the wife of another."

"Do you think I could stand peaceably by and hear you pronounce the words that would bind you to another?"

"No! a thousand times no! I would see you dead first."

"Enough of this," said Mattie, as the fire flashed in her eyes. "If you have finished, I will leave you."

"Go then, and beware! for I shall keep my vow."

Mattie withdrew to the ladies' cabin, and seating herself upon one of the lounges, she pondered long and earnestly over the words she had just heard.

At first she thought that Perry's intention had been to frighten her, and compel her by this means to accede to his proposition; but as she revolved the subject in her mind, and remembered the tone and looks that had accompanied his words, she felt assured that he had meant what he said, and that hereafter he would be a deadly enemy.

"But how," she mused, "does he intend to work against me? He dare not offer violence to me."

Her thoughts then returned to Perry's words. "I would rather see you dead than married to another man."

Perry knew that Wilson had been in the habit of calling frequently, and she feared he suspected the truth.

"If he does," thought she, "he will do him some harm. I must warn him of it."

She decided that she would write to Savannah as soon as she reached Cousin Green's, and warn him to be careful of trickery.

So anxious did she become upon the subject, that she did not retire, but sat in the same position, thinking.

About two o'clock the steamer came in sight of the lights of New London, and Mattie, in order to distract her thoughts went up on deck to look about her.

The light-house on the left of the harbor was passed, and they steamed up the Thames River to the city.

The night was a beautiful starlight one.

There was a fleet of pleasure yachts lying at anchor near the Pequod House, and their lights, reflected upon the calm surface of the water, made a beautiful picture.

Still on they passed. At last the dock was reached, and amid the bustle occurring, the steamer was securely made fast to her dock and was at rest. The mighty working of the engine had ceased.

The rattling of the trucks and carting of the freight to the cars now commenced.

The train that was to convey Mattie to her destination did not start till 6:30 A. M., so she concluded to lie down and rest till then.

At six, she arose much refreshed, and after a slight breakfast she took a seat in the cars.

She had seen nothing more of Perry since her interview with him on the previous evening.

After a short ride they reached Davis Corners, or Davisville, where Mattie was to get off.

She found Cousin Green waiting for her at the depot with a carriage.

Cousin Green greeted her warmly, and had innumerable questions to ask concerning her journey, etc.

After a short ride they reached Cousin Green's home, situated about two miles from the station, and about a mile and a half from the town of Wickford, which lay to the southward.

The house, which is still standing, is situated a little off from the main road, and near the old mill.

It was a large old homestead, surrounded by the usual number of barns, out-houses, etc.

At the entrance from the road, and on each side of the gate stood two tall poplar-trees, a landmark to the country for miles around.

Driving up to the door, Cousin Green sprung out, and assisted Mattie to alight.

Entering the house, they found the table spread, as it was nearing noon.

After the dinner had been eaten, they withdrew to the "large room," as it was called, which commanded a view of the road, leaving the help to attend to clearing away the table.

Seating themselves, they held a long conversation, as it had been a long time since they had seen each other before.

Mattie gave her a detailed account of all that had transpired, with the exception of her meeting with Perry; this she withheld, thinking that it would only lead to a succession of questions without in any manner proving advantageous to herself.

Then they strolled out into the orchard, situated at the rear of the house, and from that down to the barn. Then they rambled down near the old mill to the "pasture," as it was called, where the "critters" (or, as we would call them, cows) were quietly grazing.

Having seen all the sights that the farm afforded, they returned to the house, as Cousin Green said she had a lot of work to do, and must attend to it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DIARY.

UPON entering the saloon, Butts and the detective took a seat at the furthest table, where they would not be liable to be overheard in their conversation.

The detective gave his orders for "stews," and while the waiter was busily engaged in filling the order, Butts took the opportunity to relate to the detective the conversation he had overheard in the old house between Perry and his pal.

The detective listened intently, wondering greatly what object Perry could have in following up the young man, and of what value the papers in his possession could be to him, to cause him to run such a risk of detection.

He had heard of the attempted robbery in West Twenty-ninth Street, but had not thought of the probability of Perry being in the least connected with it.

As Butts continued the narrative, the detective rapidly jotted down in his memorandum all the principal points of value.

He could have lodged information at headquarters, and have Perry arrested at the hotel; but he did not wish to do so.

The trap was not ready yet to be sprung; he would wait for further developments.

Their "stews" having been dispatched, they separated.

It was now near morning, and the detective, wearied out with his long hours, determined to go to an old bachelor friend of his and rest himself a few hours, as he did not feel like traveling the long distance to his home.

He jumped on an Eighth Avenue car and rode up as far as Twenty-sixth Street, where he alighted.

Turning down toward the river, he stopped at a small white house, and rang the bell.

It was directly opposite the one in which the mysterious lady was boarding.

His friend was at home, and welcomed him cordially.

On learning the detective's desire to rest, he consented heartily.

Conducting him to the parlor, where there was an easy-looking lounge, he left him, saying:

"You will not live long if you do not give up that plagued man-hunting business—some deal will be putting a ball through you one of these days."

"We must all run risks at some time in our lives," said the detective, with a smile, as he turned over to go to sleep.

"Well, you won't take advice, anyhow," granted his friend.

"Would you?"

"Yes, if it was good."

"Then get married."

"Humph!" and the door shut with a bang.

The detective smiled.

Finally, thinking over the facts he had lately heard, he dropped asleep.

When he awoke, the clock was striking six.

He suddenly thought of the diary which he had in his pocket that Butts had picked up, and drawing a chair up by the window, he took out the diary of Jerry Williams from his pocket.

Commencing at the first entry, which was made in 1850, he read as follows:

"Sinclair wants me to witness a mock marriage to be performed to-morrow night. The girl is named Clara Studley, the daughter of an old sea-captain. He is to give me five hundred dollars for being a witness. The girl has got quite a fortune in her own right, and I suppose he is after some of the cash. It is nothing to me so I get my money all right. Tom Jones is to be the other witness."

Then followed another entry:

"The ceremony was performed last night, and if I had not known different, I would have sworn that the fellow was a real preacher, he acted his part so well. He would make a splendid actor if he would go upon the stage."

Further on it read:

"Sinclair seems to be quite attentive to his supposed wife. I suppose he is working for the property."

A year later was the following entry:

"Sinclair told me to-day that he fell out with Clara, and told her the truth. He said he was almost afraid to go in the house, she acted so wild. I should not wonder if he don't find it troublesome to get rid of her; these women hang on so sometimes. It would serve him right if she did, for he might have chosen others, and had no trouble with them, if he had wanted to. He said that he was going to leave, and take the gang with him."

"Ha!" ejaculated the detective, starting from his chair, "I have struck a clew that will be of some importance to me."

Then he eagerly perused the diary again.

"I don't know what Sinclair can want with the boy; he says he is going to take him, too."

A great deal of matter uninteresting to the reader, as it has no connection with the story, was passed over, and he came to the following:

"Sinclair seems to be in eternal fear of his life, for we have been continually on the move from one city to another, and at last we are here in New York City." I suppose he is in dread of the girl Clara Studley, as we have heard she was on his track several times, or else he is afraid of the police. He has changed his name, too, and is now known as Sam Perry."

"Aha!" said the detective, softly rubbing his hands together; "at last I am on the right track. Go on, my fine fellow, for you have nearly reached the end of your tether, and then you will spend a few years between four stone walls, and society will be rid of one smart villain!"

Then comparing notes with his own private memorandum, he discovered the following startling facts:

First. The person who had lost the bonds of which he was in search before he met Perry, was Captain Studley, the father of the girl whom Perry had married, or, rather, pretended to marry.

Second. The date of Perry's departure from the city of Savannah was but a few days after the loss of the bonds.

Third. Perry seemed to have practiced the deception upon the girl for the sake of obtaining possession of her money.

As the detective pondered over these facts, link by link, a strong chain of circumstantial evidence was formed from which he knew it would be impossible for Perry to escape.

Several things, however, now remained to be cleared up.

What had Perry done with the boy he had brought with him from Savannah?

As for the bonds, it was evident to his mind that Perry had either stolen them himself or hired some one else to do so.

Who could be the woman that Butts had seen following Perry? Surely it must be the same Clara Studley, he thought.

For what purpose was she following him so closely? Was it for revenge? to make him atone for the terrible wrong he had done to her? or was it merely the instinct of a mother's heart intent upon regaining possession of her child?

But what had Perry done with the boy? This was the question that vexed Thompson sorely, but without effect.

The only solution that offered itself to his mind was that he had adopted it out somewhere, and with this solution he was forced to be satisfied.

He was about to return the diary to his pocket, when his curiosity was excited by noticing that two of the leaves had been carefully pasted together at the edges.

Taking out his pen-knife, he carefully cut them apart.

The writing was written in a peculiar manner, and at first baffled all attempts to decipher it.

At last the detective muttered: "What a fool I have been. I might have thought of this be-

fore;" and rising, he walked over to the large mirror that stood in the room.

"I knew it," he said, in a satisfied tone, as, holding the book before the mirror, he found he could read the writing, which appeared in its proper form when viewed in the glass.

It was the identical fact the detective wished to discover.

It was dated four years before, and ran thus:

"To-day I placed the boy in charge of Mrs. Grimes, by Perry's orders; he says he doesn't want to be bothered with him any more."

Then followed a full description of the boy, his personal appearance, age, size, etc., and describing a large, heart-shaped scar upon the right shoulder; and the entry ended thus:

"I told Mrs. Grimes she was to keep him but a short time, and to send him to school, and that she would be paid liberally for her trouble. But if she ever sees another cent of Perry's money, then I will be greatly mistaken in Perry's character, that's all. At any rate, I am going to keep an eye on the boy, for I have an idea that I can make a good thing off my stock of knowledge by and by."

The detective shut the book, and returned it to his pocket.

"Mrs. Grimes," he mused; "seems to me I have a faint recollection of hearing that name before."

"I have it," he ejaculated, as a strange smile crossed his features, "this is one of the strangest experiences I have met with in the whole course of my professional duties."

"But I can delay no longer, for if I do, Perry may prove too smart for me. I must nab him at once, so I must be off."

His host then entered the room.

"Have you had a good nap?" he asked.

"First rate; and much obliged to you," he replied.

"Pshaw! no thanks; but you must come down to supper."

As Thompson rose to his feet to accompany his host he, glanced at the window.

As he did so, a man passed on the opposite side of the street.

The street lamps had been lighted, and as the man passed on, the detective exclaimed:

"By Jove! it's Hawkins!"

Seizing his hat, he said, hurriedly: "You must excuse me—important business—man I want to see particularly;" and he dashed out the door as if possessed.

"Queer business, this," said the bachelor, as he saw his friend disappear quickly up the street. "Glad I am not in that business; hope he will catch him, though;" and he glanced up the street to see if he could see anything more of him.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SLIGHT CLEW.

"It seems dreadful," said the lady, as Mr. Hawkins finished his narrative, "to believe that Sinclair has turned out to be such a villain. But it is a source of thankfulness to me to know that I am indeed a wife, even though it be of such a man as he is, and to know that my boy is not a child of shame."

"But, perhaps, he may have been brought up by Sinclair to be as bad as he is himself; if he has, I shall surely die of grief."

"Could I but find Sinclair," said she, "I would beg of him to tell me of my child; but this accident has robbed me of all hope. I may never see him again."

"Keep up a good heart," said old Mr. Hawkins, kindly; "a kind Providence watches over us all, and though the clouds may overshadow us now, yet we must remember that they all have a silver lining, and in due course of time it will be revealed to us."

With these and other consolatory remarks, he cheered her, and at last he left her in a much happier mood than when he entered.

In a few moments the bell again rang, and the lady, whom we shall hereafter designate as Mrs. Sinclair, heard the voice of a man asking whether the old gentleman who had just left lived there.

The girl replied in the negative, saying he was only a visitor who had just called upon a lady upstairs.

"Then take my card up to her," was the answer.

The girl left him; but in a few moments returned with the news that "the lady would receive him," and led the way to her room.

Her face expressed curiosity as to the object of his visit, but she politely asked him to be seated, and waited for him to state his errand.

The detective, like all his class, was a man of few words, and came to the point at once.

He simply said:

"Will you be kind enough, madame, to furnish me with the address of the old gentleman who left you a short time ago?"

"For what purpose?" she asked, quietly.

"I desire to obtain some information from him. You will see from my card that I am a detective."

"Does the business of which you speak concern one Sinclair, who now goes by the name of Sam Perry?"

In spite of the detective's stolidness of countenance, acquired by long practice, he could not help a momentary exclamation of surprise at the question.

"How! do you know anything concerning him?" he quickly asked.

"Yes," she replied. "I know much of him, to my sorrow. If you wish it, I will give you all the information I possess."

"Indeed, I do wish it."

She then related to him the same story she had told Mr. Hawkins but a short time before—the marriage, desertion, etc., which the detective listened to with the greatest interest.

One link in his chain of evidence was still incomplete, for Mrs. Sinclair did not think that Perry knew anything about her father's bonds, nor where they were kept, nor had suspicion ever rested upon him concerning them.

However, he felt satisfied in his own mind that the story that Mr. Hawkins had told was true, and as for the papers held by him, he rightly guessed what they were, and foresaw that it would be of the utmost importance to get possession of them immediately, lest Perry should be already trying to again obtain possession of them.

But Mr. Hawkins had told Mrs. Sinclair that the papers were now in the keeping of a friend of his. Who was the friend? and where was he to be found? or where could he see Mr. Hawkins?

Mrs. Sinclair was unable to answer these questions; it was doubtful when she would see Mr. Hawkins again; but he had promised to call when he heard more news, which might be in a week, and might be more than a month from that time. But she promised either to send him to the detective, or find out his address, as she felt convinced he would be glad to see him, as they were all working for the same end.

The detective could not reasonably ask her to do more than this, and shortly after he departed.

"How strangely," mused she, "is Providence working to assist me. What I, in my blindness, esteemed to be a trial, has proved instead to be a great blessing."

"Had I not fallen and sprained my ankle when I did, I should have missed meeting Mr. Hawkins, and then I could not have learned the truth in regard to my marriage; and had not Mr. Hawkins called here, the detective would not probably have seen him."

"Hereafter, I will strive to believe that everything works together for our own good; and let come what will, I will remain content to believe that it is all for the best!"

So she reasoned as so many reason when they are able to see the result; but how few there are that can so reason when the dark clouds of adversity sweep across life's pathway, when all our hopes seem blasted, and life but a hollow mockery.

Ah! then is the time for them to trust in Providence, and in the hope of a bright prospect ahead.

"Though troubles deep and trials steep
Should plunge us into sorrow,
Then don't give way, a brighter day
Will dawn upon the morrow.
'Twill do no good, nor ever would
To give way to repining,
Though grief o'erhroud, the darkest cloud
Conceals a silver lining."

Pardon me, reader, I am digressing from my tale.

CHAPTER XV.

PERRY MAKES A THREAT.

It was the next day after Mattie's arrival at her cousin's, and she was seated alone in a

small arbor at the foot of the orchard, 'neath the gnarled trunk of an old apple-tree.

The soft summer breezes played with her hair, and kissed her blooming cheeks, causing her to look more beautiful than ever.

Already the influence of country air and Cousin Green's society had commenced to work a change in her appearance, speaking volumes in favor of her father's judgment in sending her there.

So abstracted was she in reading the book which she held in her hand, that she heard not a light footfall on the grass until it was close beside her, and looking up, she beheld the crafty eyes of Sam Perry.

"You here!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "For what purpose, sir?" she continued, haughtily, "do you thus persist in your unwished-for attentions?"

"To win you for my wife," he said, coolly.

"It is useless," she said, "for you to pursue this subject further; and I assure you, sir, if your persecutions are carried on any longer, I shall take immediate measures to protect myself from your annoyances by the aid of the law. Now leave my presence, sir!" she said, with dignity.

Sam's eyes blazed with the passion he could not suppress, and with a voice of the deepest terrible meaning, he hissed:

"Very well. You have said the word, and from this moment I am your enemy. So beware of me, girl, for when you least expect me I shall make myself known to you, for I will not rest until I have you in my power."

"You have refused my love, and you have yet to learn what a man can do when driven to an extremity; you will yet see the day when you will beg of me to make you my wife, and then we will see who triumphs. As for your lover, he is already out of harm's way—"

"What mean you?" she cried; "what have you done with him?"

"Oh! I see you misunderstand me," he laughed. "I meant that it would be useless for you to write to him; for before he could return to your assistance, you would be safely in my power."

"Enough," she said; "you have already shown yourself in your true character, and henceforth, thanks to your warning, I shall know how to deal with you. Beware of your life, should you attempt personal violence to me;" and rising from her seat, she walked off toward the house.

Perry's eyes glittered like those of a serpent as he hissed between his set teeth:

"So, my fine lady, you defy me, do you? Very well; you will see yet that I am not to be defied with impunity by a woman. I will yet humble that proud spirit of yours, so that you will beg of me to make you my wife and save you from shame."

"And now for my plans. How am I soonest to accomplish my object?"

He stood there a few moments while his brain was rapidly concocting one of the most wicked schemes of his life. Surely he was a true emissary of the Evil One.

Finally he came to a conclusion, and with a wicked, self-satisfied expression playing over his features, he strode rapidly away in the direction of the depot.

After a long, tiresome walk he reached it, just as the station-keeper was locking up to go home, as no trains were to stop there for two or three hours.

Perry stated some imaginary business, and sent the following dispatch to New York:

"Come on to-night with another man—will meet you at the depot."

"BURNED."

"To ——. Care of Mrs. Grimes, No. — West Street."

After paying the man, and giving something extra for his trouble, he walked back from Davisville, past the road that led to Cousin Green's house, and on toward the village of Wickford beyond.

Sauntering carelessly through the village, he asked a small boy whom he met if he knew where he could obtain board for a few days.

"Waal," said the boy, "I guess you can git board at Aunt Sally's. I heerd her say the other day as how she would like to take a boarder."

"All right, then," answered Sam; "show me the way."

The boy walked on with him till he came to a little low cottage that sat a little back from the main street.

It was a very pretty place, indeed, with the trees all in bloom and clinging to the rustic porch, while an air of perfect cleanliness pervaded the entire place.

Aunt Sally, as the boy called her, came to the door as she saw a stranger approaching. She was not over thirty years of age, with a complexion as fair as in the days of her childhood, while the neat and closely fitting dress of black proclaimed her to be a widow.

Had old Weller seen her he might have had good cause to warn "Samivel" to "beware of the viddy," for the sight of her rosy cheeks and hazel eyes were enough to cause a commotion and flutter under any man's waistcoat.

Perry was quite taken aback at the sight, as she opened the door, for it was not "Aunt Sally," as he had pictured her in his mind, by any means.

"Aunt Sally," shouted the boy, "I have brought yer a boarder;" and without stopping to say more, he scampered off.

Sam bowed politely, saying:

"The young gentleman told me I would be able to find board here for awhile. I am from Philadelphia, and am desirous of spending a few weeks in the solitude of the country, and was recommended by an intimate friend to this village. May I hope to be so fortunate as to secure board in such a cosy nest as this place is?"

"I did not desire to take a gentleman," said Aunt Sally, blushing a little, "and though you seem to admire the appearance of my humble home, you must remember that I have never known you before; it would be hardly right to—to"—she stammered—"to take you without proper references."

"Oh! as to that," quietly answered Perry, in an oily manner, "I can fully satisfy you; my name is Percy. I am a merchant doing business in Philadelphia, and for references, I can refer you to some of the most influential men of that city, if you choose to take the trouble to telegraph or write."

He rightly judged that she would not "take the trouble."

"Oh, there is no need," replied the widow, in a reassuring tone, as she conducted him into the tidy little parlor.

Perry put on his most agreeable manners, for he was very fascinating when he pleased to be.

They conversed quite sociably for some time. He found her to be a woman of thorough education.

Her husband had died about a year before, leaving her in possession of the house and quite a sum of money in the village bank.

The widow was much impressed with Perry's *distingué* appearance, and once or twice found herself wondering whether or not he was a single man.

Finally she arose, and excusing herself, with the remark that she must attend to her duties, she left the room.

Perry now turned his thoughts to the main object of his journey.

He would go up to the depot the next morning and meet his pals, and through the day they would reconnoiter the house for the purpose of arranging the best plan to carry out their nefarious design.

He intended to carry out the job as quickly as possible, after his preparations were all made.

At last he seemed to have a definite course marked out in his mind, for his brow cleared, and taking up a book from the center table, he endeavored to pass away the time in its contents.

After dinner he sauntered out through the village.

Stepping into the druggist's, he made several purchases of drugs; among the rest he obtained some chloroform, which was his main object in buying, as he had only bought the rest of the drugs for a blind to avert any suspicion from him. The druggist supposed him, from his conversation, to be some student practicing chemistry, and dismissed the subject from his mind altogether.

He next proceeded to a place where he obtained the use of a horse and carriage, and requested to be shown the stock.

The man, proud to exhibit his horses to one who seemed to be a good judge, took him into the stables.

Perry's eye was instantly attracted to the one that stood nearest to him as he entered.

It was a coal-black mare, of slender build, and evidently possessed of great speed.

He then stated that he wished to engage that

one for the next afternoon as he desired to attend a party to be held at a house some five miles distant, and it was not likely that he would be back for some days, but that he would see the horse well taken care of in the meantime.

The man seemed to hesitate about letting the horse to an entire stranger, but Perry, by skillful talking and the exhibition of plenty of money, and offering to leave a large security for the horse, finally won his confidence, and he agreed to let him take her. "He had but one carriage that was in good order," the stable-keeper said, and Perry was to use that.

The carriage in question was a light-covered one, capable of holding but two, and that exactly suited Perry's purpose.

Making all the arrangements as to the time he was to call after it, Perry departed, chuckling to himself as he thought of the good fortune he had met with in his arrangements thus far.

That evening he paid to his landlady a month's board in advance, saying that he always made it a practice to do so.

This act of itself raised him still more in the widow's estimation, and she thought, as they conversed together that evening, how nice it would be to have him always with her.

It seemed that she was not one of those kind of women who believe that because their first love is forever gone that they must necessarily go on the remainder of their life in an uncomfortable state, and herein she showed herself to be, as she in reality was, a woman of sound common sense.

They passed the evening very pleasantly, and the widow bid her guest good-night, with the conviction that Perry was a perfect gentleman, thus showing the fallacy of human judgment when not strengthened by experience.

And Perry's plans were working well.

CHAPTER XVI.

BUTTS SEES SOMETHING.

LET us now return to Butts.

After leaving the detective at the saloon, he started to go home, thinking, as he went, of all the news he had heard in the old house.

He determined to go down and see the steamer off when she sailed.

As he had not seen the companion of Perry, he knew that he would not be able to recognize him without he chanced to hear him speak, and the probabilities of such a fact occurring were, to say the least of it, very doubtful.

Butts had gone there at the appointed time to see her depart; he had been standing by the gang-plank, when he heard a gruff voice exclaim:

"Handle that trunk easy!"

The words were enough. Butts knew the voice in an instant; it was the same that he had heard in the old house, and belonged to the man who had so nearly discovered him hiding in the next room.

Butts marked him closely, taking in all the peculiarities of feature, so that he would be able to recognize him wherever he should again meet him.

Little he thought that such a meeting might never occur, and that the man was doomed never more to set his foot upon that shore again.

The steamer had departed and the crowd had gathered around an old gentleman, who, as one of them said, had "fallen in a fit."

Butts did not care to stop and gaze, for his eye had caught sight of a familiar form that was rapidly disappearing up the dock.

With an exclamation: "My eye! if that ain't Perry!" he darted after him, keeping him continually shadowed.

Perry, unsuspecting that any one was watching him, wended his way toward the steamer "City of Boston," and passed aboard.

Now, indecision was not a trait of Butts's character.

He had money in his pocket, and quite an amount, too, for his employer always kept him well supplied.

Without hesitation, he followed Perry on board, and saw him purchase a ticket.

Drawing a conclusion from this that he intended to take passage on the steamer, Butts also procured a berth, and awaited developments.

Wherever Perry went, the eyes of Butts followed him, and kept him in sight. He followed him like a shadow from the time he came on board till the steamer was well out in

the stream, and satisfying himself that he had him safe enough until their arrival at New London, he went forward and amused himself with watching their progress through the water.

Tiring of this amusement, and learning that they would not reach their destination before morning, he went below to his berth, and turned in, determined to obtain a short nap, if possible, as he knew not how far he would have to travel.

"I wonder," thought he to himself, as he lay in his berth, "what that chap is up to now? Some more mischief, I'll bet, and I'm going to find out what it is, too, before I am done with him, if I have to go to Greenland."

Butts bothered his brain in vain endeavoring to solve the mystery, but without avail; and, finding his eyes were growing heavy, he turned over, and was soon fast asleep.

While he was sleeping, Perry had been holding an interview with Mattie upon the upper deck, and thus he lost one great point in his chase, and one which would have served him well in discovering what game Perry was up to.

But so it ever is in life—chances that are just within our grasp are lost through our own shortsightedness, are lost forever, and we can never again recover them, and, showing how true it is in the detective's life, at least, that he should sleep with one eye open.

Butts was awakened from his nap by the trampling of feet overhead and other sounds that denoted that they had already arrived at the dock.

He rapidly dressed, and ran up on deck. After a vigorous search, he finally found Perry as he was giving the baggage-master directions concerning his trunk.

This fact showed Butts that he had meditated a stay, and that all his plans had been arranged beforehand, for he knew he had no trunk with him when he first saw him.

Perry went back to the steamer again.

"Check that trunk in the baggage-room; it is to be sent for," he heard the baggage-master say to his assistant.

"He must be uncertain as to where he is bound," thought Butts; "else he would order his trunk checked for some place."

Butts next passed to the telegraph station, and sent the following message:

"On the trail of P——. Will report as soon as possible.
BUTTS."

It was directed to Thompson's residence.

He expected that Perry would be off in the first train, but soon found out he was mistaken, so stood on the gang-plank watching the other passengers as they hurried ashore.

So the time passed until morning, and the remainder of the passengers who were to take the 6:30 train were busy with their preparations.

Finally the train was ready, and Perry stepped on board.

Butts saw him go in the forward car, and fearing to take the same car himself, lest he might attract his attention, he took the next one.

Not a station did that train stop at but what Butts knew the face of every one who left it.

At last they reached the station where Mattie got off. She was the only one who jumped on the platform as the train came to a standstill, and again the train moved on.

If Butts had watched both sides of the track he would have done well; but he was so busy watching the platform that he did not see Perry, who, unrecognized by Mattie, had jumped from the opposite side and concealed himself before the train moved on again.

Butts was still sitting quite contentedly, thinking that Perry was safe on board the train. At the next station Butts saw that his prey did not get off—and the next, and the next.

At last he began to feel uneasy, lest he had, by some mischance, lost him, and he got up and went forward to see.

To his dismay he found that Perry had indeed slipped him.

His face expressed the dismay he felt at his defeat.

"The governor will think I am a pretty one to let a fellow give me the slip so easy," he thought; "but there's no use sitting down and holding my hands. I must go back and hunt him up."

The train stopped at Greenwich, and Butts stepped off.

The question was now what to do to again get a clew. At last he arranged a plan.

When the next train going back came along,

he jumped on, and rode to the next station. He then got off again, and made inquiries as to whether any one of Perry's appearance had got off there, and found there had not.

He then went to the operator, and hurriedly said:

"I wish to send a message to several stations along the line, and find out if such a man has stopped at any of them," giving at the same time a description, etc.

"And who might you be that comes in the office giving orders so loudly?" said the clerk, superciliously. "Who is the man to you?"

Butts had a story ready, and as he pulled out his pocket-book, he said:

"My father left New London in the 6:30 train, and as he has not reached home, we fear that he has been attacked by one of his fits of insanity, to which he is subject, and got off at the wrong station."

This explanation seemed to satisfy the operator, and the message was sent. An answer finally came from Davisville Station that a man answering to that description had been seen near the depot a short time before.

Butts waited as patiently as he could for the next train that was to stop there, and, at last, to his joy, the way freight came along, and he got on board of that and was off for Davisville.

CHAPTER XVII.

JONES CONFESSES.

IT is sunrise on the Atlantic.

A few moments to the scene connected with our story.

Before us stretches a long, low sandy beach; at a distance a group of men huddled together around a small fire, which they have made, endeavoring to keep warm; near them stands others, whose eyes are bent upon a form stretched upon the sands.

Off in the distance, clearly defined against the rising sun, is seen a wreck, and at a glance we recognize the steamer, which, a short time before, left New York for Savannah, bearing two of the characters in our story. 'Tis the old story of Hatteras and its dangers repeated.

Let us approach nearer, and find out, if we can, the explanation of the sad scene.

Yes, they are all there, not a man missing; but one, at least, is injured even unto death.

A glance at his face reveals to us that it is Jones—the tool that Perry had sent to waylay Wilson.

The group of shipwrecked mariners have gathered closer around the dying man.

He is fast falling now, and it is only by the occasional use of a strong stimulant that the last faint spark of life is kept burning.

Young Wilson sat by the head of the dying man, ready to take down his last words.

"I am ready," said Wilson, gently.

"I feel that I am failing fast," said the man, faintly, "so I will endeavor to be as brief as possible."

"In the year 18—I lived in the city of Savannah. While there, and out of employment, I accidentally became acquainted with a man known as Sinclair.

"At that time I was an honest, hard-working mechanic—when I could get work to do.

"I had been out of work for a long time, and was almost in despair at being unable to find work, when I met Sinclair.

"He treated me well, and promised to find work for me.

"One day he induced me to drink with him to such an extent that I knew not what I was doing.

"While in that state he induced me to join a gang of which he was the leader.

"After I recovered the use of my senses I was informed of what I had done, and threatened with death if I went back on them.

"I feared them, and concluded the best thing I could do would be to accept the position, and I took the obligations of the gang upon me.

"The gang was a band of counterfeiters.

"We remained in Savannah for some time after I joined them, and were busily engaged in the manufacture of bank-notes.

"The detectives were at that time busily hunting for us in New York, as our money was mostly disposed of there by means of an agent.

"Sinclair finally became acquainted with a beautiful young girl, the daughter of a sea-captain, and whose name, I remember, was Clara Studley."

"My God!" exclaimed the captain, in a voice of deep emotion. "My daughter! My daughter!"

And he bowed his head in grief at the recollection.

"Yes," continued the dying man. "It was your daughter, but I did not know it until I heard you called by name a day or two ago, and then I knew you were the father of that unfortunate young lady."

"Well, Sinclair," as I said, "formed an acquaintance with your daughter, and not content to win her, he planned and carried out a mock marriage ceremony."

The captain's head was still bowed beneath the weight of sorrow that had fallen upon him.

"At the time the ceremony took place I was ignorant of the fact of its being other than a lawful one, and it was not till some time after that I found out the truth in regard to it."

"Myself and a man named Jerry Williams were the witnesses."

His voice was growing weaker rapidly, and they gathered still closer around him that they might not lose a word of his confession.

"A year or more passed, and Sinclair had a son born to him."

"Soon after this he tired of her who thought herself his wife."

"We made preparations for leaving the city, and Sinclair thought of the marriage certificate, which was in the possession of the pseudo minister."

"The certificate of itself was of no value, but Sinclair feared that the man might keep it for blackmail."

"He sought out the residence of the man he had engaged to perform the ceremony."

"The man had died; but Sinclair discovered that before dying he had made a full confession to a clergyman—Mr. Hawkins."

"Sinclair was now fearful of an exposure and arrest, unless he took immediate steps to prevent it."

"He was ignorant of the fact that the man had died a long time before, and supposed, from his informant, that it had occurred lately."

"Then he determined to obtain possession of the paper at all hazards."

"With this end in view he found out the clergyman's address, and called upon him."

"Bribes, persuasions, or threats were all useless. The minister clearly expressed his determination to expose the whole scheme."

"The clergyman also intimated that he possessed knowledge which, if Sinclair did not publicly marry the girl, he would bring into notice before the public."

"What that knowledge was he did not say, but Sinclair grew uneasy about it."

"That night Sinclair made an attempt to rob the house and procure the papers, but was unsuccessful. The next day the clergyman disappeared, and shortly after Sinclair, fearing an exposure from some unknown quarter, took his child and cleared out, taking the gang with him."

"The woman whom Sinclair had abandoned tracked us to several of the principal cities."

"Sinclair, however, proved too smart for her, and baffled all her attempts to reach him."

"One day I saw her in Washington, but she did not recognize me, having never seen me but once."

"She had a wild, startled look in her eyes, such as you sometimes see in the insane, and had she then met Sinclair I would not have answered for his life."

"We did not stay in Washington long, as times were very dull and the detectives were too sharp."

"After a long consultation with the rest of the gang, Sinclair concluded to make New York our headquarters."

"When we reached the city we found to our dismay that the girl had found it out, and was again on our track."

"In order to throw her off the scent, Sinclair changed his name to that of Perry—Sam Perry we then called him."

"What name did you say?" interrupted Wilson, excitedly.

"Perry," replied the man, faintly; "but if you interrupt me so I shall not be able to finish my story, for I am fast going now."

Wilson tenderly raised the dying man's head, while one of the by-standers gave him a draught of brandy.

It revived him considerably, for he continued his story with more clearness:

"After we had been in New York for some time, Perry found an old broken-down house in West Street, and after a little time we had it suitably altered for our business."

"We then went on with our old work."

"Things went very smoothly for awhile. Perry still had the boy in his possession, but he seemed to care nothing for him."

"There was evidently something on his mind that disturbed him greatly. He had in his possession a large number of bonds that he never made use of."

"If any of the boys made a remark about them, he would turn it off with a laugh. One day I found out what they were. They consisted of bonds, title deeds, and other valuable papers relating to property situated in or near the city of Savannah, and made out in favor of Captain Studley."

"I expected as much," ejaculated the captain, *sotto voce*.

"One day Perry came in much excited."

"He had that day seen old Mr. Hawkins, the clergyman of Savannah, and the man who held the papers he wanted so badly to gain possession of."

"A plot was laid by which we were to capture him, and bring him to our den."

"After meeting with numerous difficulties; for in a large city a thing of that kind was not easy, we at last succeeded."

"However, our work was comparatively useless, for old Hawkins had not the papers in his possession, nor would he tell where they were."

"We tried every method to make him promise to produce the papers, but all without avail."

"Finally, after keeping him locked up for awhile without effect, the captain, as we called Perry, concluded to frighten him and see what he could do by that means."

"He was given to understand by the captain's orders that we were going to murder him in cold blood, whereas, we only intended to take him to the dock and duck him several times, and then bring him back to the den."

"The old cove proved game to the last, and we blindfolded him and started for the dock."

"When we had nearly reached the river a cop hailed us, and thinking he might ask more questions than we cared to answer, we dodged one side, and waited for him to pass us."

"As we started out again we met him coming, and he fired."

"In self-defense we returned the fire and ran."

"I think our prisoner must have been hit, for as I let go of him, he dropped like lead to the sidewalk."

"We afterward found it out to be true, and that he had revealed to the police all that he had seen in our den; but as they knew nothing about the location, they were unable to find us."

"We could not again get trace of Mr. Hawkins, but Perry, by some means, found out that the papers he desired were in the hands of a young man named William Wilson, the man who is now sitting by me writing."

Wilson nodded a silent assent.

The crew of the vessel were listening eagerly to this strange recital, and a strange scene was presented to the view.

The bleak coast, the wrecked vessel in the distance, and the group gathered around the man who was so soon to appear before the bar of judgment, all made a scene of deep and thrilling interest not soon to be effaced from the minds of those present.

The dying man continued:

"Perry fell in love, or professed to fall in love, with a young girl, Mattie Templeton, the daughter of a rich merchant of that city."

Wilson set his teeth together hard, but he said nothing.

The captain exclaimed softly:

"My brother-in-law!" unheard by any one but the young man.

"It seems the young lady did not care for Perry, and as much as told him so."

"This only made him the more determined to win her for his wife."

"Wilson was also in love with Mattie, and was the more fortunate."

"This increased Perry's hatred for him, and he determined to get rid of him forever if possible."

"He found out where he lived, and gave me orders to go to the house one night and procure the papers in the possession of this young man; but I was unsuccessful. You may have read of the affair in the papers, but they did not know my real object."

"However," he said, now addressing Wilson, "Perry heard you were to sail in this steamer on some business for your employers, so I was ordered to track you and get the papers at all hazards, and"—with a faint smile—"you all see the result."

For a few moments he lay with his eyes closed and said nothing.

"The boy! What of the boy?" asked Captain Studley.

"The boy," said Jones, slowly, "was given in the care of Jerry Williams, to be taken and left in the care of some one; but Jerry disappeared soon after, and I never found out what was done with the little fellow, whom we all loved, if our hearts were wicked."

The man's breath came in short, quick gasps, and the ominous death-rattle in his throat told more than words could utter.

"The paper!" he gasped. "Quick—till—I—sign."

It was passed to him, and the pencil placed in his stiffening fingers.

Slowly, and with a painful effort, he traced his name beneath the statement he had made.

"Now I can—die—easier," he said, as they laid him back upon the pillow.

"See," he exclaimed, raising himself up on his couch and pointing his long, bony fingers in the air—"see! she is coming—and accuses me of stealing her child—I—"

His muscles relaxed, and with a dull, heavy sound he fell back a corpse.

And the soul of Tom Jones had gone before its Maker to be judged.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CAPTURE.

WHEN Thompson left the house of the lady, he took the cars for the ferry, intending to return home directly, so as to learn what news Butts had discovered since he saw him last.

While in the cars, he again drew out the diary, and to pass away time and to fix facts more firmly in his mind, he again ran his eye over the contents.

One circumstance still annoyed him greatly; he had been unable to find the whereabouts of Sam Perry as yet.

The detective already held evidence enough against him to insure the world against any more plottings by him in the future.

What scheme Perry had on hand was still to him a mystery, for he knew nothing whatever concerning Mattie Templeton.

The detective's theory was that Perry's eagerness to obtain the paper was to secure himself by destroying it, so that nothing could be done with him by the woman he had wronged so shamefully.

Thompson chuckled grimly to himself, as he thought what would be Perry's astonishment and dismay when he should ascertain the truth of the matter.

In his own mind a conviction had been growing, gaining strength rapidly, as proof multiplied on proof, until it amounted to a certainty.

"How strange," he mused, "are the ways of Providence, and how true are the words of the good Book. 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.' Blind mortals that we are, we can not see the workings of a divine hand guiding our ways."

What the discovery was that the detective had made will be shown in the *dénouement*.

His reflections were cut short by reaching the terminus where the cars stopped.

Walking down Fulton Street, he crossed the ferry, and was soon comfortably seated in his own room.

He had still some time to wait before he could reasonably expect Butts to call, so being tired out, he threw himself on the lounge to take a short nap.

Now, the detective did not mean to drop off in a sound sleep, but human nature proved too strong for him that time, and when he awoke again it was midnight.

Butts had not called, he knew, for the alarm had not stirred.

Grumbling something about "neglect of orders," he again dropped to sleep and slept till day-break.

Rising early, he made his toilet, and breakfasted, and still Butts was missing.

Time passed until the middle of the afternoon, and Thompson began to grow impatient and angry.

Giving up all hope of seeing him before night, he prepared to go out.

A knock was heard at the door, and the voice of the landlady, saying:

"'Ere's a boy, Mr. Thompson, as has got a telegraph for you."

The detective took the message, which was the one Butts had sent from New London.

It did not seem to enlighten him much, however.

"On the trail. Will report soon," he muttered, as he read it. "Well, that's clear, I'm sure; about as clear as Jersey mud.

"Who can he be tracking out there? Is it Hawkins, or Perry, or the Queen of England, or who?

"What good does he suppose those few words are going to do me? But," said he, "I suppose I might as well exercise patience, as I will find out just as quick by doing so.

"And now for Twenty-sixth Street, till I see if I can learn anything further of Mr. Hawkins, though it will be doubtful—very doubtful, indeed."

Upon reaching the house, he found that Mr. Hawkins had not called since he had been there last; so after a little desultory consultation he left, crossing the street to his friend's house, from the window of which he had first caught a glimpse of Mr. Hawkins.

His bachelor friend welcomed him with his accustomed cordiality, and after supper they had a quiet game of whist to themselves.

They had been drinking wine from time to time, and Thompson had grown so excited in the game that he had not drunk with his usual prudence, and the consequence was that his brain was not as clear as it should have been.

He was surprised when he looked at the clock to find it was after eleven.

His friend pressed him to stay all night, but Thompson refused, saying that he must return.

On leaving the house, he got turned in the wrong direction, and instead of going toward Eighth Avenue, he started off toward Ninth Avenue.

The cars on that line had stopped running for the night, and he crossed over and went on to Tenth Avenue, thinking in his own mind that it was Sixth Avenue.

After waiting for a car till he was tired, he started to walk down-town.

He was proceeding quietly along West Street in a somewhat lonely locality when two men, coming from an opposite direction, ran against him violently.

His watch was snatched from his pocket, and a blow from one of the ruffians sent him reeling to the ground ere he had an opportunity to defend himself.

His companion stooped to rifle his pockets, when, catching a sight of Thompson's face, he started back with an oath.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the gruff voice of the other.

"Well," he replied, "if I hain't seen that face before somewhere then I am mightily mistaken; that's all."

The other stooped, and peering carefully in the fallen man's face, he said excitedly:

"We've got a big haul to-night, Tom, and no mistake. Why, this cove is the great detective, Thompson, that they say is on our track; quick now, we must secure him."

The detective was slowly coming to his senses again, and strove to rise.

One of the ruffians drew from his pocket a small vial and a sponge, which he saturated with its contents, and held it to Thompson's nose, who again sunk back insensible.

He had been chloroformed.

The firm step of a policeman was heard approaching, and they drew the detective to one side in the deep shadows.

The guardian of the night, unconscious of the scene that had just transpired, passed by, and his step soon died away in the distance.

When he had disappeared from sight, the ruffians, lifting the body of the unconscious man, bore him rapidly away.

They conveyed him to the same house in which Mr. Hawkins had met with such cruel treatment.

Before they had reached it, however, the detective, unperceived by them, had recovered consciousness.

He had sufficient self-possession, however, not to betray himself to his captors, and he knew from the circumstances that it would be impossible to attempt to escape; so he remained perfectly passive and quiet though his brain was busy.

The excitement of the last few minutes had made him perfectly sober.

Soon the voice of an old hag was heard asking:

"Who have you got there, boys?"

"It's Tom Jones, dead drunk," said the first speaker, who did not wish to impart too much information to the old woman.

The detective opened his ears as he heard himself called by the name of a man he wanted so badly to find.

"Come, Mrs. Grimes," said the other, "let's have a glass of grog ready by the time we take Tom down where he can sleep off his drunk."

"I'm on the trail at last," thought Thompson; "but in rather a bad position to follow it up, for they hold the winning hand at present."

The old hag started off to get the drinks, and the men, who only wanted this for an excuse to carry off the detective without having him recognized as a stranger and not Tom Jones, lifted him up, and telling her to mix the drinks good, they again lifted Thompson and carried him down-stairs.

They took the precaution, however, to again dose him with chloroform before they started, and to the detective's intense disgust he was again compelled to succumb to the influence of the drug.

With a grin of delight they announced to the gang:

"Boys, we've captured Thompson, the detective!"

Some of them received the news with joy, while one old fellow, who had evidently seen years of crime, growled out:

"Look out you haven't got a white elephant."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ABDUCTION.

It was evening, and Mattie was quietly seated in the large room at Cousin Green's.

She had been employing her time in reading, but it had grown so dark that she was unable to do so any longer.

Cousin Green was busily employed at the time in the kitchen attending to her household duties, and Mattie had no one to talk to.

The weather was so very pleasant out-doors that she felt strongly tempted to walk out and enjoy it.

She called out to Cousin Green that she was going to take a stroll in the orchard.

At her advice she put on her overshoes, for the dew was on the grass, and throwing a light shawl around her shoulders, she started out.

Under the trees, loaded down with their golden fruit, she passed, till she reached the tree where she had last met Perry.

Seating herself, unconscious of danger, she leaned her head upon her hands, and indulged in a long train of reflections.

Thinking of the happy days in store for her in the future, and pondering over the question of the strange manner that had revealed to her the true character of Sam Perry, and how hard it would be to make her father believe the truth of one in whom he had reposed so much confidence.

It is an old saying that if you think of anybody but his satanic majesty, he will appear before you.

It would seem to apply in this case, for if Mattie had turned her head at that moment she would have seen the malignant face of Perry peering through the darkness.

Slowly and cautiously he crept, lest by the least sound he should startle her.

Suddenly he sprang upon her, and with a quick movement, ere she had time to scream, he had thrown a heavy cloak over her head, thus muffling her voice.

The surprise and fright had been too strong for Mattie, and she fainted.

Perry raised her easily and carefully in his arms, and bore her a short distance to the road.

Taking a silver whistle from his pocket, he blew a short shrill call upon it, and a covered carriage was rapidly driven to the spot where he stood.

Placing the inanimate form of Mattie in it, he sprang in himself, and taking the reins in his hands, he said to the man who stood holding the horse:

"You and Mat go ahead to the depot, so as to be ready; there should be any trouble," he said, and giving the horse his head, he drove rapidly off in the darkness.

Mattie had recovered from her swoon, and Perry seeing this had removed the cloak, allowing her to breathe more freely.

At the same time he cautioned her against making any outcry to attract attention.

"What mean you, sir, by such conduct?" she demanded, imperiously.

"Stop the carriage and let me out instantly," she said, with flashing eyes; and she made a dash at the reins in Perry's hands.

"Not so fast, my pretty one," said Perry, with a sneer, as he evaded the attempt. "I told you I would win you, but you would not believe me. How nicely you placed yourself in my power;" and he laughed sardonically.

"If you do not let me down instantly," she said, "I will cause your arrest by the first policeman we meet upon the road."

"It would do you no good," he said, fiercely. "I would say you were insane, and who would believe your story. Look at your appearance, and then think if any one would believe your words."

Mattie was indeed in a sad plight.

Her dress torn, and covered with mud from the carriage wheels, her face flushed, and her hair in the greatest disorder, while her nerves were all shattered from the shock they had received.

She saw the force of Perry's reasoning, and groaned inwardly as she thought of her position. Yet she did not despair of final relief when they should reach the station; at least, she could make the attempt even if it ended as he had predicted.

When they reached Davisville they found no one there but the station-keeper, and were told that no train would arrive for an hour.

Mattie endeavored to speak to the man, but Perry was talking very earnestly to him outside; evidently he was carrying out the plan he had mentioned to her on the way.

He had already sent one of the men back to the village with the horse and carriage, and instructed him to proceed from there to New York.

The other fellow had idly sauntered inside, and was intently watching her from under his heavy eyebrows.

Perry and the station-master next came in together, and Mattie instantly threw herself upon the protection of the latter.

At first he received her story with incredulity; but Mattie pleaded so earnestly that finally he began to believe her story, and when she told him about her cousin Green, he doubted no longer, but knew her story to be true.

Perry had in vain endeavored to keep her silent by threatening gestures, unseen by the station-keeper, but without avail.

Finally the man turned around, and facing him, said bluntly:

"I believe there is some rascally plot here, and I am going to protect the girl, for I am sure she is telling the truth, and that you have been lying to me."

Perry replied with a fresh supply of lies, but his purpose was now different; he did not expect him to believe them at all, nor did he have that intention.

Darting a quick glance at his accomplice, who evidently was waiting for it, he gave him a wink which was answered by a nod, and in a moment both men sprang upon the station-keeper, and bore him to the floor.

The noise of the approaching train was now heard in the distance.

"Quick!" cried Perry; "a rope!"

The other drew a cord from an inside pocket, and with it they bound the prostrate man.

Perry then gagged him, and taking the key of the station from his pocket, he dragged Mattie outside with him, and locked the door.

He then threw the key away.

The train thundered on and came to a standstill at the depot.

"No one at the station," said the conductor, as he saw it was shut up.

"All aboard," he shouted; and Perry and the companion who was with him hurried the girl on the cars.

Mattie was so stupefied with horror at the scene she had just witnessed, that she knew not what she was doing. She acted like one in a dream.

The cool audacity and daring of Perry had given her a still deeper insight into the reckless character, and she deemed him capable of any villainy.

After they were off he drew from his pocket a time-table of the road, and found that no train would stop at Davisville before nine o'clock the next morning, and by this time he would be safe from all harm, even by the wires.

Mattie once thought of appealing to the conductor, but he was such a cold and stern-looking man that she feared to do so.

What a long, weary ride that was, and how she longed for a chance to communicate with some one who would rescue her from the villain who so coolly rode beside her!

She looked around the car in hope of seeing some friendly face.

But the passengers were too much taken up with their own thoughts, at least, what few still remained awake, while the greater number were resting with their heads on the seat boards, and snoring profoundly, and even the lights in the car blinked sleepily, as if they had caught the infection.

But all nights, however long, must have an end, and this night was no exception to the general rule, and just as the darkness merged in the gray dawn of a gloomy morning, the train reached New York and ran into the depot.

All was now bustle and confusion; the sleepy passengers started up, and in a half-dreamy way began to hunt up their baggage, and departed as if regretful at the interruption to their dreams by the reality of life.

Mattie, half dazzled and bewildered by the confusion, was hurried out of the depot by Perry, and rushed into a carriage that stood in waiting.

It was driven so quickly that the carriage door slammed ere she had time to remonstrate.

Perry called out some directions to the driver, and they were driven rapidly off.

Mattie said nothing, knowing that anything she could say would not alter his determination in regard to her, and she wisely kept silent.

The carriage window was down, as the morning was close and foggy.

They were just turning a corner when Mattie saw the blue coat and brass buttons that designate a policeman.

Quick as a flash and ere Perry had a chance to divine her intentions or stop her, she had thrust her head out of the window and uttered a loud cry of "Help!"

Perry uttered an oath as he rudely grasped her arm and drew her back; but she had fulfilled her intentions, and now awaited anxiously for the result.

The driver of the cab, who was one of Perry's gang, on hearing the cry, immediately whipped his horses to their utmost speed.

"Faster!" yelled Perry, excitedly.

"Stop, or I fire!" yelled the policeman, who endeavored in vain to overtake them and was rapidly losing ground.

A loud, tantalizing laugh broke from Perry's lips, as, turning a corner, they lost him to view altogether.

"Another time," he hissed, "and it will go bad with you; I want no trifling!"

Mattie did not condescend to answer him; she saw how completely he had her in his power, and she determined that it would be unwise for her further to exasperate him.

Perry had closed the windows and drawn down the curtains, and she had no opportunity of telling where they were going.

She could tell by the easy riding of the carriage that they were running on the city railroad tracks, but further than that she could discover nothing; and leaning back on the cushion, she endeavored to plan some means by which she might be able to escape from Perry's clutches.

After a ride which seemed to her interminable, Perry uttered an exclamation of: "Here we are at last!" and the coach came to a standstill.

Mattie looked around, but saw no one; the street was totally deserted.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRAIL LOST.

THE train stopped at Davisville, from which point the message had come, and Butts, full of eagerness, jumped off.

Upon inquiring of the ticket-seller, he found that the man answering to his description had been seen going off in the direction of Wickford.

Evading the questions of the agent, who seemed curious to know who the man was he was after, he started off down the road toward the village.

Pursuing his inquiries in a manner that was not calculated to arouse suspicion, he finally, after much trouble, traced him to the village.

At last he tracked him to the livery-stable, where he learned of the arrangement that Perry had made about the horse, and what time he was to call for it.

Being now quite hungry, he went to one of the eating-houses, or oyster-houses, as they should more properly be called, and had a "good square meal," as he expressed it.

A little before the appointed time he called at the stables, but what was his dismay upon learning that Perry had been gone a full half hour.

He was shown the road that he had taken, and started on, although he despaired much of being again able to find him.

"A slippery cuss he is," he muttered, as he strode on.

On, on, through the gloom of approaching night he went, past houses whose lights had been extinguished for the night (for they go to bed early in the country), past the road that led to Cousin Green's, with his ears alert to catch any sound of carriage-wheels, but without success.

He had passed his game.

He reached "Devil's Rock," where tradition states that his satanic majesty once stepped, and shows, in proof, his foot-prints on the surface of the rock.

Butts paused irresolutely; the thought came to his mind that perhaps Perry had turned off in the road he had passed.

The conviction grew upon him so strongly that he was right that he turned to retrace his steps.

He had proceeded but a few hundred yards when his quick ear caught the sound of carriage-wheels approaching.

"All right," he exclaimed, joyfully, as he stepped to one side in the shadow of the bushes.

The carriage dashed by, and instinctively Butts knew it to be the game he was after, and sprung after it, intending to jump on behind it.

The horse was making splendid time, and the young detective found it was no easy matter to catch it, as he had at first supposed it would be.

Still he kept on a dead run.

He had the reputation of being a fast runner, and after running awhile, and getting his "second wind," as he called it, he went on with comparative ease.

The horse, however, was steadily gaining on him, and finally was out of his sight altogether.

Finally Butts reached a place where the road forked.

He knew that one of them led to the depot, and that Perry would doubtless take that one; but he had neglected to note particularly which road it was when he had first traveled it, and now found himself sorely puzzled.

Finally he concluded to keep straight on, and did so for a short time, when the thought struck him to look for marks of carriage-wheels.

There were none, and blaming his own stupidity in not thinking of it before, he retraced his steps and took the other road.

By his mistake he had lost much valuable time indeed.

He had already missed the carriage a second time, for it had been driven back by Perry's confederate while Butts was retracing his steps to the forks.

The boy, however, was ignorant of all these facts, so he trudged patiently ahead till he at last reached the depot.

Arriving there, he found the depot as silent as the grave.

The train had been gone some time.

Butts leaned against the door, and began to reflect as to what would be the best move to make next, when he heard a faint moan inside the station.

At first it startled him, but after a few moments he came to the conclusion that it must have been the wind.

Presently he heard the moan repeated, and this time he was sure he was not mistaken.

Some one was inside, and evidently in pain.

Again he heard it, and there was a faint cry of help.

"Foul play here somewhere," said Butts to himself; and he endeavored to force open the door, but without effect.

He then procured a light rail off the nearest fence, and tried it as a battering-ram; but the door was too strong for his efforts.

Seeing the outlines of a house a short distance off, he concluded to seek help.

Walking up to the house, he approached the door and rapped loudly.

He was answered by the barking of a dog, who was, however, chained fast.

In a few moments a night-capped head was thrust out from a window above, and a shrill voice asked:

"What are you disturbing peaceful folks for at this time of night? Go way, or I'll set the dog on you."

"I want to get into the station," replied Butts. "Who has the key? and where does the keeper live?"

"I don't believe you," grumbled the woman to herself, though Butts overheard her.

Then aloud she said:

"You had better clear out if you want to see the station-master; you will find him at the second house above."

And the window came down with a slam.

"S'pose she thinks I want to cut her throat and rob her," grinned Butts, highly amused, as he started on to the second house above.

Arriving there, he found that the station-master had gone on to the depot some time ago and had not returned.

"And likely," remarked his wife, "he has gone to sleep there."

Butts did not wish to distress her by telling her what he suspected, so he merely bid her good-night, and started off.

He proceeded to the next house, where he succeeded in awakening the farmer and bringing him down to the door.

A few words sufficed to explain to him his suspicions, and in a few moments the farmer was ready, and they started off together for the depot.

Slightly suspicious of the boy, the farmer took the precaution of putting in his pocket an old horse-pistol that hung over the shelf and which looked as if it might have seen service in the Revolution.

Butts smiled as he noticed the movement, but he said nothing.

At last they reached the station, and listening a few moments, they again heard the moans, but fainter than they had been when Butts first heard them.

Picking up the rail that Butts had vainly used, they attacked the door, and in a few moments it flew open.

A strange scene met their eyes.

On the floor, bound, gagged, and helpless, lay the station-master.

His struggles to free himself must have been great, for the strong cords had cut deep in his wrists and ankles.

Cutting them loose, they chafed his limbs, and he slowly recovered consciousness.

For awhile his brain seemed to be too confused to answer clearly, but he was finally able to explain his situation and the way he came to be placed in it.

The description of the man had confirmed Butts's original suspicion that it was Perry's work.

He also saw that Perry would immediately return to New York.

"Can't you telegraph to New York and stop him?" asked Butts.

"No," was the reply; "he has got there by this time, and is now safe beyond reach, and it would be useless."

Butts inquired when the next train would stop, and was informed.

"But look here, young man," said the station-master; "didn't you say, when I saw you last, that he was your father?"

Here was a quandary; it was plain that that story would not do, and he did not wish to tell the truth about the matter, but he saw that he would be compelled to do so or have trouble.

He then told the whole truth in the case.

"And how are we to know you are telling the truth now," said the farmer; "it's a strange story—a strange story, indeed."

"Well!" replied Butts, "if one of you will go as far as Groton with me on the next train, I will telegraph, and satisfy you for your time and trouble."

The farmer finally agreed to do so, and invited Butts to come to the house with him until after breakfast, which he did.

At last the time came for the train to arrive, and the farmer and his charge took their seats, and they were off for Groton.

Arriving there, a message was sent to Thompson's address. In an hour or so an answer came back:

"Thompson is not at home; don't know where he is."

This did not satisfy the farmer, and he took Butts over to New London with him, and left him in charge of the sheriff till they were able to hear from Thompson.

"A queer go this," said Butts, disgusted with the business. "I suppose if Mr. Thompson has gone off on a week's tramp, I will have to wait his pleasure here, and meanwhile Perry will go on as he likes; but we'll see."

And the way he shook his head showed that he meant something more than he said.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAFE AT LAST.

FOR a few moments the passengers stood looking at the man who had just yielded up his life to his Maker, and then they silently dug a grave there on the sands, while the captain, in a few impressive words, said the burial service over him; then the grave was filled up, and the body of Tom Jones was laid away from sight, never more to appear till the last trumpet shall sound, and he shall be called to the bar of judgment for his sins on earth.

This done, they turned their attention to the task of rigging some means to escape from their position.

Accordingly, under the captain's directions the boats were got ready for service, and after serving out what few provisions that were left equally among them all, they embarked on their voyage.

They reached Beaufort without accident, and the next day took the steamer for Savannah.

Arriving there, Captain Studley invited Wilson to be his guest while he remained, and the offer was accepted.

Seated in the parlor that evening, Wilson explained to the captain all that he knew in relation to the matter. "And as for the papers, I have them all safe," returned the young man.

"Might I ask if one of them is the marriage certificate in question?"

"It is."

"How!" interrupted the captain, eagerly, "you say it is. Did you manage to save the paper?"

"I did," answered Wilson; and as he spoke he drew from an inside pocket an oil-silk packet closely tied.

Unfastening it, they found the papers had not been at all wet.

"You see," said he, as he did so, "not knowing what might happen ere we reached here, I thought it a good plan to secure them in this manner, and when the vessel was in such danger, anticipating the worst, I secured them in my person."

You did well. And now," said the captain, in a voice of emotion, "let me see the paper in question."

It was shown to him.

"Can I retain it?" he asked, after glancing over it, and passing it to his wife for her inspection.

"I would gladly allow you to do so," said the young man, "were the papers mine; but they were only intrusted to me for safe keeping; and, though I doubt not that you have the best right to them, yet I can not conscientiously allow them to pass into any other hands but those from whom I received them. The party that gave them in my keeping," he continued, "gave me instructions that if they were not called for by him in a certain time, that I was to make their contents public—the time wants a month or more of completion. This certificate is the only paper open; the rest, you see," displaying the others, as he spoke, "are securely sealed."

"And where, and who is the party that places so much value upon papers that concern me and my family?" asked the captain, earnestly.

"He is an old friend of mine. Mr. Hawkins—"

"Hawkins?" interrupted the captain; "that is the name signed to the bottom of the certificate. See! there it is. 'J. C. Hawkins.' What sort of a man is he?"

The young man uttered an exclamation of surprise as he satisfied himself of the truth of what the captain had stated.

"There is some strange mystery here," said he. "I only read the certificate once, and then I did not notice that the name is indeed that of my friend. He is a true and noble man, and I have known him for a long time. I wonder how they came to use his name in the transaction, and how he managed to gain possession of the paper afterward."

"I think I see it all now," said the lady. "There used to be a clergyman in this city by that name, who had a son that was said to be very wild and a great trouble to his father; this must be the man. His son has doubtless been prevailed upon to perform this ceremony, and the father, hearing of it, has in some manner become possessed of the certificate to hide it from the world."

"You are doubtless right," said Wilson. "As I have sometimes heard him speak of his son that was dead, but always with sorrow, and a desire not to cast a reproach upon the name of the dead has been one of the reasons that induced him to keep the paper secret."

"Did you say that he is now in New York City?"

"He was, when I last saw him, and had been there for some years."

"How did you come to get these papers?"

"He came to my house some months ago, and had a long talk with me. He told me that an attempt had been made upon his life in order to gain the papers, and asked me to take charge of them, as no one would then know where to find them."

"I promised him I would."

"He then gave me instructions to make them public if I did not again see him in a stated time, as I told you before. The time is nearly up and I have not yet seen him."

"His last words were: 'If you do not see me within three days after the expired time, take these papers and place them in the hands of the police. They will explain all.'"

"By the dying man's confession, you have seen that Mr. Hawkins's precautions were of no avail. He may even now have been murdered by some of Perry's gang, even as that man made the attempt on my life."

"How long will it take you to transact your business here?" asked the captain.

"That I do not know until I investigate it a little," replied the young man.

"I intend to return with you and see this Mr. Hawkins, if he is still living; if not, I shall help to investigate the matter."

"That is the best plan possible under the circumstances," Wilson answered, after thinking for a moment.

It was thus settled, and shortly afterward they separated for the night.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DETECTIVE PLAYS A GAME.

WHEN Thompson again came to his senses he found himself surrounded by a swarthy, villainous-looking set of fellows, whose faces seemed to designate that they were daring and reckless enough for any kind of wickedness in existence.

Involuntarily (for he had been unbound) he thrust his hand in his inside pocket to draw his revolver.

It had been taken from him.

The ugly faces of the men around him were drawn in a grin of delight as they saw the movement.

"Guess your days for doing us mischief are about over," said the man who acted in the capacity of leader in Perry's absence. "How do you like your new situation?"

And he laughed loudly.

It was obvious that the best plan would be to say nothing, so as to avoid exasperating them, so Thompson kept silence.

"Won't speak, hey," said the man who first addressed him. "Well, I guess you will before we have got through with you."

Turning to the gang, he said:

"Show him to his room, boys—the place where we kept old Hawkins, you know."

"Hal!" thought Thompson, "then this is Perry's gang of counterfeiters, is it? Well, if I don't make something out of this, if I ever get away, then my name ain't Thompson, and I'll give up the business altogether."

His face lengthened, though, as he glanced around, he saw the small chance there was for his success.

They then thrust him in a low vault opening from the room, and slammed and bolted the door outside, and he was left in perfect darkness.

"Now, to find out what sort of a trap I am in," he said, groping cautiously around.

His hands touched the sides; they were cold and smooth.

"Iron," he muttered.

It was evidently a vault where they hid their implements if they had any fears of the police, for the door was so arranged that it could not be distinguished from the rest of the wall on the other side.

Groping around in the darkness, he found an old cot in one corner, and seeing any chance of escaping was useless, he threw himself upon it to rest himself.

"What a fool I was," he mused, "to drink

when I had so much at stake; but this I swear, if ever I get out of this accursed place, I will never touch the poisonous stuff again."

So saying, he dropped off to sleep.

When he again awoke, some one had brought in a plate of food and a candle, and placed them on a stand by his bed.

"Well, whatever they intend to do with me, it is evident that they do not mean to starve me," he said, as he saw it.

He made a hearty meal, and when the man came in to remove the dishes, he ventured to inquire as to what disposition they intended to make of him.

The man would not answer a word, as he probably had received orders to that effect, and finally Thompson abandoned the attempt as useless.

He lay back upon the cot, and as the man took up the light to leave him, he prepared to take another nap.

The detective looked up to where the light was reflected on the ceiling, and as he did so he involuntarily started.

The back of the man was turned toward him, and he did not observe the movement.

This was the cause of the detective's excitement. He had seen in a glance that the ceiling of the cell did not consist of iron like the sides, but of pine boards.

All day the detective lay there plotting, and when the man had brought in his supper he had arranged everything in his mind.

"Rather dull this," said he to the fellow who brought in his supper for the night. "Couldn't you lend a fellow a book and candle to read it by?"

The man seemed surprised at the cool manner in which Thompson took everything. He went out, however, and after a short consultation with his mates, he brought in a dog-eared volume of "Jack Sheppard," and laid it beside the candle.

"Good-night," said the detective, as the door closed behind him.

A laugh arose from the men. They could not but admire such cool audacity.

Could they but have known the deep meaning conveyed in these two brief words, they might not have considered it a laughing matter.

Hastily swallowing the food, he commenced operations. Taking off his vest, he drew from the lining of it a flat leather case.

Opening it at the end, he drew out a long, slender steel saw.

Standing on the cot, he commenced his operations. At first he feared that the boards might be but a lining, and that the roof, or ceiling, was like the rest, of iron.

His doubts were soon dispersed, for the slender blade slipped through to its whole length.

Satisfying himself upon this point, he waited to see if he had been heard outside; but everything was as silent as the grave.

He was impatient and anxious to escape speedily, but he deemed it best to work cautiously.

Slowly he removed the boards one by one, until he had made a hole sufficiently large to admit of the passage of his body.

Drawing himself through, he found himself underneath a bedstead, and in a large room.

It was unoccupied, but he did not know how long it would remain so, and he looked around for some weapon in case he should be interrupted.

A large bureau stood in one corner of the room, and crossing over to it, he drew out a drawer, and hastily overturned the contents in his search. He was rewarded by finding a small silver-mounted revolver, and loaded. He stuffed it in his pocket with a satisfied smile.

Then he opened the door, and took in his position.

The only means of escape that presented itself to his view was through the bar-room, and there was no one there but an old woman, whom he had heard called Mrs. Grimes, who was dozing by the bar.

He stole cautiously forward across the floor, and had nearly reached the door when the old hag awoke with a start.

Recognizing him at a glance, she pulled a bell-cord that hung beside her, that immediately aroused all the sleepers.

Thompson sprang to the door just as two men entered from the outside.

They understood the scene at a glance. Knowing their own lives would be the forfeit should he escape, one of them drew a revolver and fired at the detective.

it was life or death with Thompson now, and he well knew it.

As the man raised his revolver he dropped on one knee, and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

At the same moment he fired at the man who stood in the door-way.

"U" sim was true, and the man dropped to the floor.

Springing at the remaining man, he struck him with the butt of the pistol, knocking him senseless to the floor.

As he did so, the men came running up the stairs with knives and pistols flashing.

One man, unsuspecting of anything unusual, was in the act of entering.

Ere he had time to think or act, the detective had given him a heavy blow in the stomach which doubled him up completely, and darting on, he ran along West Street, closely pursued by three of the gang.

Finding that they could not overtake him, one of them fired at him, but without effect.

The detective turned partly around to return it, and as he did so, the fellow fired again, and Thompson dropped like a log to the pavement.

The three men ran up and bent over him.

"I've finished him this time," said the man who had fired, as he pointed to his temple now covered with blood. "He's done for now, sure."

"Well," said another, "he was a sharp one, and no mistake; just to think how he got out of that vault, and how cool he was about it. As long as I have been in the gang, I never noticed that it had a wooden ceiling."

"He stole Mother Grimes's pistol," said a third one, as he rolled the body over with his foot, and discovered the revolver in his rigid grasp; "but smart as he was, his days are now over. I wonder what the captain will say when he gets back again?"

So they stood and looked at the man they had shot down so murderously, with no compunction in their hearts for the horrible deed they had committed.

Finally they turned and walked away.

About a half hour afterward, a policeman came sleepily along, and nearly stumbled over the body.

He uttered a cry of horror as he did so, and rapped for assistance.

The roundsman and another came to his help, and together they carried the inanimate form to the station-house, and the tragedy was ended.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MATTIE A CLOSE PRISONER.

THE house before which the coach containing Mattie and Sam Perry had stopped was a large brown stone edifice in one of the up-town streets.

Perry sprung out, and grasping Mattie by the arm, rudely forced her to alight.

Vainly she glanced up and down the streets, in the hope of seeing some one to whom she might appeal for protection; but no one could she see.

Ascending the steps, he rang the bell. It was answered by a smart and tidy-looking young girl.

"Tell your mistress I wish to see her," he said, tossing her one of his cards.

The girl picked it up and walked off.

Perry then ushered his prisoner into the drawing-room, and coolly invited her to be seated.

The woman of the house soon made her appearance.

Her personal appearance was not by any means prepossessing.

Her features were coarse, her eyes sly and cunning, and taken altogether, her face wore a most forbidding aspect.

She bowed to Perry as she entered, then glanced slyly from under her heavy eyebrows at Mattie.

It was but a glance, but she seemed to discover the situation immediately.

"I have brought you a patient," said he; "and I wish you to take charge of her, and use her well. She is slightly deranged here," and he tapped his forehead significantly.

The woman nodded.

"I want you to see that all her wishes are attended to," he continued.

"She may wish to tell you a long story, but I wish you to pay no attention to any of her idle fancies. Do you understand?"

A slight motion of the head was her answer.

"I shall see that your services are made good,

besides your other duties, so you will lose nothing by obeying my orders. Is the north room ready to receive her?"

"Yes," was the reply, spoken as if she had accidentally let it slip from her mouth in the effort to nod her head.

"Then conduct her there immediately, and see that the door is kept securely locked. Also see that she has nothing about her by which she can injure herself, for it may be that she will have one of the violent fits to which she is subject, after I am gone. And now lead her there, and be careful that she does not by any means prove too smart for you, and so escape."

Mattie sat and listened to this conversation like one in a dream, for the events of the past had followed one another in such rapid succession that they seemed like the shifting scenes in a drama rather than the stern, cold realities of every-day life.

Perry walked over toward her, and bending down, whispered:

"It will be of no use for you to attempt to escape me, or to say anything concerning the little game I have been playing upon you, for it would not be believed; besides, the woman is in my pay, and dare not betray me, if she knew it to be the truth."

This he said in a mocking, tantalizing tone, and adding, as a last bitter sting: "I will be back again soon to see you," he took up his hat and departed.

"Come," said the woman to Mattie, gruffly. "Come on. I'll conduct you to your room;" and she seized her by the arm.

For a girl of Mattie's frame, the attempt to struggle with such a powerfully built woman would have been sufficient to have given a color of truth to Perry's statement, and she was sensible enough to perceive it, so she merely said: "Lead on, and I'll follow you."

"No you don't!" replied the woman, with a cunning leer in her eyes. "You can't play any of your smart crazy tricks on me. I'm too old a bird for that. You expected to be able to dodge out of the door and escape, but I don't see it."

She had divined Mattie's purpose exactly.

"Now, you go on ahead, and I'll follow," said she, quoting Mattie's words.

Seeing it was useless to parley further with such a woman, she made no reply, but ascended the velvet-carpeted steps, followed closely by her new jailer.

"This is your room," spoke the woman, as they arrived on the top landing and throwing open a door as she uttered the words. Then pushing her in, she passed in herself, locking the door behind her, and placing the key in her pocket.

"There is another room opening into this, which can be at your service, if you should have any company to receive;" and she laughed coarsely at what she considered to be an excellent joke.

The rooms were both richly and elegantly furnished.

The woman left her, telling her to be quiet and conduct herself peaceably, and she would be well treated. She locked the door behind her and was gone.

Mattie sunk into an easy-chair and listened to the sound of retreating footsteps. Not a shadow of a chance could she see for escape.

Looking from the windows at the house in the rear, the idea entered her head to make signals to the people in the house, whose rear faced the one in which she was confined; but she reasoned that if they should come to the house and inquire, that the same story would be repeated to them that Perry had told the woman, and they would, of course, believe it as truth, and think no more of her, unless it should be to watch her for curiosity, or point her out to their friends as the "poor mad lady," so she abandoned that idea as futile.

Nothing remained undone, as she could see, to make her imprisonment perfect; and she at last was compelled to acknowledge the stubborn fact.

A number of books lay upon the table in the center of the room, and Mattie endeavored to occupy her mind with reading; but the words danced and flickered before her eyes. Now a picture of the malignant face of Perry would seem to start from the book, and after a moment disappear. Then it would be a view of Cousin Green's house, with the peaceful, contented look it wore when she had last seen it.

Again, it would be a large steamer, bravely plowing the waves of the Atlantic, while a face radiant with hope seemed to smile upon her.

The scene changed, and through her half-closed eyes she saw a shipwreck. Then she saw the form of one clinging to a spar with the courage of despair.

It passed, and in its stead she saw a long, low stretch of sand, and a silent form covered with a piece of boat-sail.

Then the scene changed more rapidly, every one, as they appeared, seeming to loosen some imaginary cord that bound her. At last a sweet feeling of peace and security came over her, the book fell from her relaxed grasp to the floor, and she slept sweetly and serenely.

When she awoke again the afternoon sun was shining brightly through the windows, flooding the room with its golden beams.

Thoughts of her lover occurred with her waking, and the dreams or visions of the past hour returned to her with startling clearness.

"Oh, what will William think when he finds that I am gone?" she sighed. "Will he have any suspicion of the truth and hunt me up?" Her eye rested upon a copy of the *Herald* of a late date, and the thought occurred to her to look among the arrivals at Savannah, and see if perchance he had yet arrived there.

The following item caught her eye, and she read hurriedly:

"The steamer 'Star,' from New York to Savannah, was wrecked on Wimble Shoals two days ago. The passengers and crew have not yet been heard from, and fears are entertained for their safety."

The paper had probably been seen by Perry, and placed there that she might also read it, and to see that she was now completely under his control; and as she realized that she now had no protector to save her from this human fiend, her feelings overpowered her, and she sunk back in a dead faint.

No one was near to assist her, and she lay for a long time like one in her last sleep. Finally Nature reasserted itself in the exhausted frame, and she slowly recovered consciousness.

"William dead!" she moaned, as she recovered her thoughts, "buried beneath the dark waves of the fierce Atlantic, and I helplessly in the power of this man! Oh! what is life to me now; would that I could leave this world of sorrow, and join William whither he has gone. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Tired Nature again asserted itself, and her eyes again closed in sleep. The mellow glow of sunset illuminated the room with its beauty, spreading a veil of golden halo over the fair face of the beautiful sleeper, around whose mouth lingered the lines of a deep sorrow. Truly she was being tried in the furnace of affliction.

Even the callous heart of the housekeeper was touched as she entered the room the next morning with her breakfast and saw her lying there so innocent and sorrowful.

Her touch had in it something of tenderness as she bid her rise and take her breakfast.

Mattie was surprised to see the bright rays of the morning sun peeping in the windows, and they had in them something that brought a beam of sunshine to her own heart.

The woman informed her after she had finished that Perry had signified his intention of calling upon her that day.

She also advised her to conciliate him, if possible. "For," said she, "he is not a man to be trifled with, I assure you."

Her remarks showed that she had not been deceived in any manner by Perry's words, but that she had clearly seen through his plan; but she did not consider that she had any right to interfere in the matter, as she would be throwing herself out of a splendid situation without sufficient recompense, and gold was the only idol she admired.

For gold she would have sold her own soul, as we find many who doubtless have, as far as perjury, theft, murder, robbery, and all species of riot and debauchery can go to rob a man of all hopes of a happy hereafter.

The tender feeling that had been but momentary died out, leaving the cold, mercenary spirit of the woman to seem the darker by the contrast.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUTTS GROWS DISCONTENTED.

THE sheriff, in whose charge Butts had been given was a cross, crabbed old fellow well suited for the office.

He had very exalted notions of his own dignity, united to a pompous, overbearing manner.

that was laughable to those out of his clutches, and unendurable to the smaller fry that was in them.

It had been some considerable time since he had been able to show his authority, and he therefore unburdened his mind by keeping a strict watch upon his prisoner, lest he might give him the slip, and conveying to the troop of open-mouthed rustics who were following him, the idea that he had in custody a prisoner of great importance to the State.

Butts did have a notion to run away, but on second thought, concluding that he would receive an answer from Thompson by night, he remained contented with his situation, amusing himself by addressing some of the crowd in slang phrases, until commanded by the aforesaid pompous sheriff to "shut up," when he subsided.

The sheriff concluded to take the prisoner to his house, as having no formal charge against him he could not very well lock him up in the jail; besides, it would be preposterous to suppose that a boy like him would be able to escape from him—the sheriff of New London.

He therefore took him to his own house, and after giving him his supper, he conducted him to an upper room, and thrusting him in, telling him to "go to bed," he locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and descended to the bosom of his—the aforesaid sheriff's family.

"Well," said Butts, as he found himself alone, "this is a go! Here I expected by this time to have Perry safely spotted, and now he has got away from me, and I am here fast as a rat in a trap."

"I hope the governor will hurry up and get me clear, for I am sick and tired of this town already in general, and of this room in particular."

"It might suit some," he reflected, "but hang me if I am that some."

He sat down and waited patiently until the shades of evening had begun to settle over the city; but still no message rewarded him for his patience, and it soon ran out.

"This is more than I bargained for," he said; and his feet commenced to beat a tattoo on the floor with the intention of bringing some one to him.

In this he was successful, for the stately tramp of the pompous sheriff was heard on the stairs, and the door was opened with a rough demand of "What's wanted now?"

"I want to get out," said the boy, in the words of the famed starling.

"Can't let you out," was the abrupt reply, "till I hear from New York, if I have to wait until Christmas. Duty is duty, young man."

And with this solemn declaration, which Butts had not denied, he again retired.

"Yes, duty is duty," said the boy, meditatively, as the footsteps retreated. "That's just exactly what I believe. And that's why I ain't goin' to stay here any longer than is absolutely necessary."

He then commenced his operations to carry out his intention of parting with the sheriff.

The lock which secured the door was put on from the inside, and taking his jack-knife from his pocket, he loosened the screws so that it would be easy work to remove it when the time came for him to do so, and then his preparations were complete.

He waited as patiently as he was able, until he heard the clock in a neighboring steeple strike eleven, then he drew out the screws, removed the lock, and listened to see if he had been heard but he had not.

Then he slowly and cautiously stole down the stair-way. The gas in the hall-way had been extinguished, leaving it in perfect darkness.

Butts quickened his steps, and had nearly reached the door, when he unluckily ran against the hat-rack, bringing it down with a loud crash.

The noise brought the sheriff, who was just preparing for bed to the scene.

Rushing down the stairs, half undressed, with a lighted candle in his hand, he started after the runaway, who was vainly endeavoring to get the hall door open.

He had nearly reached him, and a few more steps would have sufficed to enable him to grab him, but "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," says an old proverb. For that one moment enabled Butts to swing open the door, and with a loud, tantalizing laugh of defiance at the discomfited sheriff, he darted down the street.

The face of the sheriff, as seen by the light

of the candle in his hand, was purple with rage at this slight upon his authority, and carried away by passion, heedless of his personal appearance, he started after the flying figure of the boy.

As he did so, his foot slipped over the rack, where it lay across the hall-way, and down he came, making it forever a hopeless wreck, and giving his devoted nose such a shock as to set it bleeding copiously.

Puffing and blowing, he scrambled to his feet, and darted out in the street in full pursuit.

Then followed a scene laughable in the extreme, had the peaceful inhabitants of that city been but awake to have seen it.

First, the figure of a boy, running with all his speed down Main Street; after him, with his night-cap on, and his long night-shirt flowing gracefully in the night air, his face red with exertion, and an old pair of slippers on, came the sheriff, with one hand over his nose to stop the bleeding, and the other raised threateningly toward Butts's retreating figure, who was quickly lost to view in the darkness.

Blinded with rage, the sheriff did not see that he had lost him, nor did he well know where he was himself, till running in contact with a night watchman, who grabbed him, he realized the position that he, the pompous, dignified sheriff of that great city, had placed himself in, and his reflections were by no means of the most soothing character.

The watchman having been roused from a sound nap by the noise, and not yet fully awake to the true state of the case, held on to the sheriff with a tight grip, and it was only after considerable trouble that he was convinced of the fact that he had got hold of the wrong man, and by that time the right man was well out of danger from pursuit.

"You had better go home," said the watchman, who had now recognized him, "and get back to bed again as quick as possible before any one sees you. A pretty condition you are in now; it would hardly look dignified if any one were to see you that knew you."

"As for the boy, I will go down and see if I can find him, but I do not think there is much chance for success, after he escaped you."

This, with a slight sarcastic smile that nettled the sheriff exceedingly, though he dared not notice it, as at present he held the losing hand; but he thought to himself, if ever fortune should place this man in his power, he would make him regret it; but he smothered his feelings as best he might, and said, coaxingly:

"I hope you will say nothing hereafter in regard to this, and I will see to it that your discretion shall be well rewarded when I see you again."

So saying, he retraced his steps toward his home, a "sadder if not a wiser man" than he was when he left it, and with the idea slowly creeping in his head that, though a sheriff, yet a man could escape him as easy as from any one else.

Let me say here, for the benefit of those readers who may wish to know it, that the watchman considered the joke far too good to be lost, especially as he had but a poor regard for either him or his word, and for a long time afterward all that was necessary to annoy the sheriff was to say something in his presence about sleep-walking.

It produced the same effect upon him that the sight of a red handkerchief would upon a turkey gobbler between whom (the sheriff and the gobbler) there was in disposition a slight resemblance.

After the sheriff had departed for his home, the watchman did not go to look after the boy, but sat down on a neighboring stoop to think about it, and the subject appearing too foggy, he soon nodded welcome to the drowsy god.

Meanwhile, Butts had arrived at the depot, and dodging behind a pile of bricks, he waited further developments.

Hearing nothing after awhile of his pursuer, he cautiously stole out again and reconnoitered. Presently the plash of a steamer's paddles was heard, and the Groton ferry-boat, with a load of cars bound for New York, soon after arrived.

Now was Butts's opportunity, and he prepared to avail himself of it.

After the cars had been landed, and the locomotive attached to them, Butts stole under the rear car, and seated himself upon the truck-frame.

He had intended to clamber on top, but seeing the engineer and brakeman talking together, and fancying that they were on the lookout for him, he did not dare to.

"This is going to be a cool place, at any rate," said he, as he placed his feet upon the frame that formed the brakes, while he threw his right arm around one of the pieces that held the trucks together.

After the train had started, Butts found out that his position was not near as comfortable as he had at first supposed.

The rapid motion of the cars over the ground caused his head to swim if he looked down for an instant; but that soon passed over.

The sparks from the locomotive also annoyed him, and the cinders blew in his face and nearly blinded him.

Still he clung on for dear life, for had he relaxed his hold for a moment, he would have been instantly crushed between the truck-frame and the ties.

At last the train came to a stand-still, for the purpose of attaching more freight cars and oiling up.

Butts now crept out, for his legs felt cramped up from the position in which he had been placed.

When the signal for starting blew, he got back to his former place, and kept it until the train ran into the depot at New York, when he jumped off and cleared out.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE next day Wilson and Captain Studley went out together to the office of Perkins & Jones, the Savannah agents with whom the young man had business to transact.

Wilson made all his arrangements for entering directly upon his duties, and found, when he did so, that there was still one thing wanting, and that was capital.

This he needed to go into his duties as searchingly as was necessary.

As soon as the captain heard this, he offered to advance the money himself.

Wilson, however, refused, saying that he would be enabled to send for letters from his employers for credit, and that he could wait until then; but the captain would accept of no denial under any consideration, and would not be put down by any arguments that the young man might have to offer, so at last he accepted it.

The papers were then drawn up, and it was agreed that he should start upon his duties in a short time.

Wilson seemed delighted with the prospect that opened before him. He was to have a good position, with ample salary to support a wife; and he looked forward to the future as full of bright prospects for him.

He took occasion, when they had left the office, to express to the captain his thanks for his kindness.

"Tut, tut!" said the captain; "the shoe is on the other foot; the thanks ought to be to you, for, had it not been for your assistance, I would not now be here. I have done nothing worth speaking of for you yet."

By this he implied that he intended to do still more for him in the future.

"What do you intend to do in the interval before you begin your duties?" asked the captain, as they were walking home together.

"There is a steamer to sail to-morrow," he replied, "and as there are several things I will require that I will have to get in New York, I thought of taking a trip back again."

"I am with you there," said Captain Studley. "I feel anxious to clear up the mystery that is involved in those papers, and so, as I have at present no vessel, I shall go too. I will also have to report the particulars of the steamer's loss to the owners in the city."

Wilson expressed himself highly pleased at the prospect of a companion on his way back.

On the way home Wilson stopped into a tailor's and ordered a suit, as his own was rather the worse for wear.

The next day they were busy in preparing for departure, and at last the time came for them to be off, and they went down to the steamer together, and were soon leaving the city far behind, passing down the narrow river that emerged into the open sea.

Soon the light-house was reached and passed, and they were fairly off for New York.

Wilson watched the scene till the light-house had passed from sight, then he sat down on one of the steamer's benches, and indulged in a fit of musing.

He was at length aroused from his reverie by

the voice of Captain Studley exclaiming in his ear:

"A penny for your thoughts, my boy."

"I was just thinking," replied Wilson, with a smile, "of the folks at home, and the surprise there is in store for them by my return here."

"Yes, I suppose it will be somewhat of a surprise," returned the captain, smiling; "but I am inclined to think it will be an agreeable one to one person at least," with a meaning glance at the young man as he spoke.

"But I hope that I also may meet with a surprise by finding the whereabouts of this Mr. Hawkins when we get there. I don't know exactly how it is, but I feel a strong presentiment that he is the one to again restore happiness to me, and I feel the strongest desire to see him and learn from him all that he knows."

"Well," replied William. "I also wish to see him, and have this affair cleared up, as much as yourself. How it is to be done is more than I can understand; but let us hope for the best, Captain Studley, let us hope for the best," he said, cheerily.

Slowly seemed the days to pass that were occupied in their passage: each was busy with his own thoughts, and all conversation, no matter on what subject commenced, would invariably turn to the same subject—the mystery of the papers and Mr. Hawkins.

It was a still, clear day when they passed Hatteras Light. The sea was calm and smooth, and nothing gave token of that terrible night, so recently passed, when they battled for life in its treacherous waves, and conquered.

The sights recalled to their minds distinctly the dreadful scene, and prominent among the rest arose in their thoughts the picture of that man breathing his last upon the barren sands, and the small heap of sand which now marked his resting-place, if perchance the restless sea had not already swept it out of existence, and claimed again the victim who had been wrested from its grasp.

At last the trip was ended, and the steamer rapidly approached the great metropolis.

Sandy Hook light was made and passed, and steaming slowly up the harbor, the wharf was reached, and after much puffing and exertion of the steamer, they were finally made fast to the dock, and the bustle of landing was commenced.

They concluded to go to a hotel for the present, until they were able to look around and find a quiet boarding-house; and so they left their trunks on board the steamer, with instructions that they were to be sent for when required, and hailing a cab, they stepped in, and were soon comfortably seated in a room at the Metropolitan.

After arranging their toilets, they immediately wended their way to the office of Perkins & Jones, in order that Wilson could report the success of his mission.

After much delay in crossing the crowded streets, they at last reached the office, and ascended the stairs.

They opened the door and entered.

Mr. Jones was seated by the window reading. He raised his eyes carelessly from the paper as his visitors entered.

"My stars!" ejaculated the old gentleman, as his eyes rested on Wilson. "Where in the name of conscience did you come from? I had given you up for lost," and he shook his hand warmly as he spoke.

Wilson introduced the captain, and they sat down together to recount the story for the benefit of Mr. Jones.

"We heard," said the old gentleman, "that the steamer had been wrecked, and all hands lost."

"Which was partly true and partly false," said Wilson in reply. "I suppose you are satisfied that I am real, and not an inhabitant of the spirit world."

"You look natural enough," rejoined Jones, laughing; "but now for the story."

Wilson furnished him with a detailed account of it as far as is known to the reader.

Mr. Jones seemed greatly agitated when he mentioned the name of the man who had been buried in the sand; but he subdued his feelings by a powerful effort, and it was attributed to natural emotion only.

"This misfortune will put us back considerably," said Mr. Jones after hearing him through.

"When will you be able to start again, Wilson?"

"You are mistaken," said the young man, "about the affair, as it will by no means cause

us any delay, for the business is already settled."

"Settled!" said Mr. Jones, with a look of astonishment. "How is that?"

"Why," returned Wilson, "the arrangements are all completed. I saved the papers, and everything has been settled. I am to commence work in a few weeks."

Seeing that Mr. Jones still looked astonished and incredulous, William detailed to him all the particulars of the affair, including the part Captain Studley had acted in it by furnishing him with the requisite capital.

"I am much indebted to you," said Mr. Jones, turning to the captain, "for the kind service you have rendered this young man; and if you will but state the amount, it shall be immediately refunded to you, with our deepest thanks for your kindness."

"That I shall not do," said the captain, "for I wish the amount to remain to the young man's credit. I have an object in this, which I shall not now reveal to either you or the young man."

The merchant saw that he was in earnest, and reiterating his thanks for his kindness, he dropped the subject.

They were preparing to leave, the young man telling his employer that if he had no occasion for his services then that he would like to have the day to himself, and receiving the assurance that he might have all the time he wanted until the steamer returned, when a noise was heard on the stairs, and a moment after Mr. Perkins entered the room, highly excited, and holding a newspaper in his hand.

"Good news!" he exclaimed, holding the paper toward Mr. Jones, and in his excitement ignoring the fact that there were strangers present. "Good news! The crew and passengers of the steamer have been reported safe. Here is the Savannah paper, with a full account of the particulars, just brought on by the steamer."

Then for the first time seeing the two gentlemen present, he stopped abruptly.

Wilson had his back turned toward him as he entered, but as he ceased speaking, he turned around and said, pleasantly:

"A fine day, Mr. Perkins."

The gentleman gazed at him a moment in speechless astonishment; finally he found his voice, and grasping the young man warmly by the hand, exclaimed, heartily:

"Why, where in the world did you come from, and how did you get here?"

"I came from Savannah, and upon the same steamer that brought the paper that you have just brought in," and then he narrated the facts as he had before done for Mr. Jones's benefit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NOT DEAD YET.

THE policeman who had heard the report of the pistol fired at the detective hurried to the scene, but when he had reached the spot, he could see nothing of any one.

Finally his eyes rested upon what seemed to be a dark object stretched upon the ground, and he hastened to the scene.

The detective lay in a pool of blood just where he had fallen, and seemed, to all appearances, dead.

"A bad case—a bad case!" muttered the policeman. "Another man shot, and no clew to the murder. Well, he's finished, I suppose;" but in order to satisfy himself, he placed his hand over the region of his heart, but could distinguish no movement.

"I would be a strange thing if he could live after having a hole there," he said to the policeman who had answered to his rap, and now stood looking on.

Then the roundsman joined them, and with their united help they conveyed the body of the detective to the station-house and laid it down.

"Send for the doctor," said the captain. "It is of no use, I know, but I would rather have it done, so as to leave no room for talk from outsiders."

It was done, and what was the surprise when, after a careful examination, he reported that the man was still alive. He was then lifted up and placed upon a soft mattress, while the doctor went to work to discover the extent of his injuries.

After procuring some warm water and soap, the doctor pronounced the wound a mere scratch; the ball had struck the temple, glancing off, and doing no further injury than plowing the skin and knocking him senseless.

"An eight of an inch nearer," said the doctor, "and he would have been as dead as a door, nail. But look; he is coming to!"

It was so. Even as he spoke, the detective slowly opened his eyes and gazed around him in bewilderment.

"My eye!" exclaimed a new-comer, who had just entered the room and seen his face. "It's Gus Thompson, as I live! I wonder what scrape he has been in now."

The mention of the detective's name caused a general excitement among those present, who had long heard of him by reputation but who had never before seen him.

Their conversation was cut short by the doctor, who ordered that Thompson be kept perfectly quiet for a time, till he had a chance to collect his scattered senses; in the meantime, he suggested that they all keep perfectly quiet about the affair, as it might do a great deal of harm to his plans if it should be known of his condition.

All this time Thompson had lain perfectly quiet, his watchful eye first looking at the doctor and then at the others, but he seemed too weak to make an effort to speak.

The doctor's face expressed grave doubts as he returned to the man's bedside after the room had been vacated.

Approaching the patient, he took one of his hands in his own, and looking him in the eye, he asked, kindly:

"How do you feel now, Thompson?"

The man, hearing his name called, turned a vacant look upon the doctor, but made no answer.

Another question being put to him, he suddenly broke out with:

"Yes, there they come; they think they are going to catch me, but they won't. Didn't I fool them nice? Ha! ha! ha!" and he laughed immoderately.

The doctor's fears were verified; the man was temporarily insane. The shock of the bullet, though not sufficient to kill him, had been sufficient to confuse his ideas.

It was difficult to say how long it would be ere he would recover his lost faculties. He had known of cases where it had only lasted for a few days, and he had read of others where it had taken months.

However, he prepared him a soothing drink, and left him, with orders that he was to be kept perfectly quiet and free from excitement, and with these instructions, he left him to the care of a competent man.

For reasons best known to himself, the chief of police, after hearing a report of the affair, and visiting the detective, gave orders that a full account of the case be sent to the papers, differing only from the real truth of the matter in one particular, and that was that they reported him as dead.

Whereas the reader knows to the contrary.

The chief's reason was this: He reasoned that if Thompson had some game in pursuit at the time he was shot, that they would be altogether thrown off the scent when they read of his death in the papers.

Consequently, if Thompson recovered his senses, as they expected, he would be able to take up the trace again without the least trouble. So the long days passed.

Every care that the imagination could conceive was bestowed upon the unfortunate detective; but so far they had been without avail in accomplishing the much wished for result.

His mind seemed to be in a cloudy state; not enough indeed to interfere with his knowledge of what was going on at the present time; but the faculty of memory seemed entirely to have left him, and he was unable to remember what had been said five minutes after the words had been uttered. He was also quite weak still from the loss of blood.

In the counterfeiters' den the gang had congratulated one another that their powerful enemy, whom, perhaps, they feared more than any other person living, was now at last unable to inflict further harm upon them.

"Yes," said one of the gang in reply to another who had just addressed him, "it was a good thing that we finished him. If he had got away from us, we would have had the whole force down on us in an hour's time."

"But," chimed in another, "who would have dreamed of his getting away from us in that style; he must have served his trade at carpentering. However, if he had been searched at first, as he ought to have been, he would not have had even that chance. However, it's all over with him now, and we might as well drop

the subject. It's all well enough to talk now about what should have been done, but the thing is now, to be careful in the future about what we are doing."

These sensible remarks were looked upon with favor by the rest of the gang, and the conversation ended.

"I s'pose we can go on with the circulation of the queer, now he's gone; can't we, leftenant?" said one of the gang, addressing the man who officiated in the absence of Captain Burney, better known to the reader as Sam Perry. "You know," continued he, "that the detective was the cause of our stopping, and as the captain seemed to be afeared that he was on our track."

"Yes," put in another, "there's no one knows enough to catch us now except the Bowery Detective, and he has retired from business."

"Well," said the man addressed, "I am going to wait until the captain comes, and let him give his own orders. I am not going to take the responsibility on my shoulders, by any means. I might not please him if I did—"

Before he had finished speaking, Perry entered, and was greeted with loud exclamations of "How are ye, cap?" and other words of a like character.

"Pretty well, boys," answered Perry, as he threw himself in a chair. "How have you been getting along since I left you some time ago?"

A chorus of voices was raised to answer him, but he gently waved them quiet by his hand, saying:

"One at a time, if you please; it will last longer. Let me hear what my luff has to say."

The individual addressed gave the chief a full account of all that had transpired during his absence, and concluding with the capture, escape, and death of Thompson.

"Good!" said Perry, as he finished, rubbing his hands together, as if he were highly pleased with the news. "That is one good deed done, for he was the only man that at all bothered me. And now, boys," addressing the gang, "I guess we had better proceed to business, and shove out some more. But I am tired out, boys, for I have been out on a long, long trip, and I am pretty well used up. So I will leave you and see if I can not get a few hours' sleep, which I much stand in need of."

Saying this, he arose, and bidding them good-night, he left them.

There was much curiosity manifested in their faces as to where he had been that had tired him out so, and for what purpose, but none of them had courage enough to ask him.

Some of them shook their heads and said:

"Business is pretty heavy on the captain; he is working too hard, and ought to have some rest—or else he has something else upon his mind outside."

And they turned their attention again to their work.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PLANNING ESCAPE.

THE first days of Mattie's captivity had nearly passed away, and still Perry had not called; but as the day was fast drawing to a close, and as the hands of the clock pointed to half past five, he was announced, and permission asked if he could see her for a few moments.

"Of course, as I am in his power, he is at perfect liberty to come, as I can not prevent him," she said, bitterly, in reply to the servant who brought the message.

His step was now heard upon the stairs, and in a few moments the door was thrown open, and he entered the room.

His personal appearance was much improved to what it had been when she saw him last.

The look of anxiety which he had worn then had now disappeared, and in its place was a self-satisfied smile that augured ill to Mattie, and she felt it so.

"Have you no word of greeting for me?" he asked, softly, as he bowed, and seated himself a little distance from her.

Mattie cast a look of withering scorn upon him as, ignoring his question, she asked, haughtily:

"How long do you intend to keep me confined in this house?"

"Pray do not treat me in such a cool manner," he answered, coolly. "Let me talk to you in a sensible manner."

"That would be impossible," she retorted.

"Softly! Do not interrupt me. Your stay

here depends upon your own will, for the matter rests in your own hands. If you choose to become my wife, you can leave here as soon as the ceremony is completed; but if, on the other hand, you refuse this offer, you will stay here until you do come to this opinion; only, I warn you that I am not the most patient man in the world, and if you persist too long in remaining obstinate, then I will take other measures which I shall not now explain to you, but which, I am sure, will be strong enough to induce you to change your tone; but whether I shall be as lenient to you as I am now it's another question altogether. But you knew this before, so I will not repeat it. I leave this subject in your hands."

"Then," replied Mattie, spiritedly, "I shall stay here!" And by the determined manner in which she uttered the words, they were enough to convince him of the fact that she meant them. "My friends will find me, though it should take months to do so, and I shall yet be able to free myself from your unwelcome presence."

"Very well," he said, repressing his anger by a strong exertion; "but I warn you that you will not find the position as easy as you expect. It will be a useless waste of patience on your part, as for the chance of your friends finding you here, I can assure you that there is not the least possibility of such a thing occurring. Remember you were missed from Rhode Island, and no one would dream of searching for you here."

Mattie saw the force of his reasoning, but she bravely faced him, though her heart was heavy as lead.

Perry's voice assumed a much more tender manner than he had yet used, as he continued:

"Besides, Mattie," said he, as he arose and advanced to take her hand—"besides, I love you, and would do all in my power to make you happy if you would but give me the opportunity to do so. Only say that you will marry me, and I will have the ceremony performed here this evening that will make you my wife."

What a strangely pleading tone he had!

Either the man was a most consummate actor, or one of those strange specimens of human nature that sometimes perplex us to place them.

Mattie answered him scornfully, and defied him to do his worst.

His manner changed instantly to a savage scowl.

"So be it!" slowly, and with a cruel emphasis on each word. "So be it, my proud, beauty; and I swear that you shall be mine. Your lover is already out of my path; you can not call on him for assistance!"

In the excitement of the moment Mattie had forgotten the blow she had so lately received; but now it recurred to her with redoubled force.

What a cool, calculating villain was the man now, as he stood watching for the effect his words produced, as Mattie sunk back in her seat and tightly clasped her hands to her temples without speaking.

Perry's last shot had hit the mark. His words had opened afresh the wound in her heart, and she moaned bitterly.

He stood watching her for a few moments longer; and seemingly satisfied, he gave vent to a savage laugh, and left the room, locking the door behind him.

Mattie sat for a long time buried in grief, until she was aroused by the entrance of a girl with her supper.

It was not the same person who had brought her her meals on former occasions, but the one who had opened the door for Perry when they had first arrived at the house.

The girl cast a compassionate glance upon Mattie as she saw the traces of her recent grief.

Mattie instinctively felt that she would be able to find a friend in the person of this girl if she made the effort.

As soon as the door had closed, she told her rapidly, and in as few words as possible, of all the indignities to which she had been subjected at Perry's hands, and the poor girl listened attentively, stopping her every now and then till she went to the door to see if any one was outside listening.

"Will you help me to get away from here?" asked Mattie as she concluded.

"Be aisy," replied the girl, in a rich, full brogue. "It's not the loikes of me that would be ather seein' a fellow-crather in distress and not help thim out. Bad cess to the master for

such a villain as he is! Shure, I know enough about him. It shall never be said that Mary O'Connor refused her aid whin it was wanted."

"Shure, I fell in love wid your purty face whin I first saw ye, and I made up my mind that there was some mischief up."

"They told me when I started up here not to moind anything that ye might say, fur they sed ye was mad; but I guess I can see as far through a mill-stone as any of thim."

"God bless you!" murmured Mattie, as she listened to the honest avowal. "You shall lose nothing by your sacrifice if I once get clear of this house. I had almost despaired of ever being able to leave until—"

And she covered her eyes at the recollection of Perry's words.

"There, now," said the girl, soothingly, "it will be all right. Now whisht till we see what is to be did."

They then arranged a plan for action.

It was agreed that Mary should steal up to the room at twelve o'clock that night with the key, as she knew where it was kept.

As Mary would of course be unable to retain her place afterward, she was to leave with Mattie, and go with her to her own residence, where she would be well taken care of.

The arrangements were finally settled, and the girl removed the tray and returned again to her accustomed duties.

Mattie sat down to await with what patience she could the hour fixed upon for her departure.

Many were the varied thoughts that were surging through her mind during those few remaining hours. What would Cousin Green think of her sudden disappearance? she thought.

And now she regretted that she had not taken her fully into her confidence, and then she would have had a clew by which they might have found her.

But the thought that caused her the most pain was the anxiety and grief it would cause her father when he heard the news.

There were many sad thoughts that occupied her mind, and tended to make her still more anxious to escape as the hours drew slowly on ere the momentous time should come.

To her the moments seemed lengthened into hours, and glancing at the clock upon the mantel she saw that it was only ten.

Slowly, slowly crept the hands around the dial, as if Time had also got tired of his duties.

Eleven o'clock—one hour more between her and liberty.

Patience, Mattie, patience!

Five minutes of midnight, and the stealthy sound of a key turning in the lock was heard.

"What if it should be Perry?" thought Mattie, with a momentary thrill of alarm.

She was reassured, however, for as the door swung noiselessly open, the honest face of Mary O'Connor greeted her.

Her features expressed fear and anxiety, for she half doubted the success of the scheme.

"Are ye all ready?" she asked, in a shrill whisper.

"Yes," was the reply, in a low voice.

"Thin follow me."

And slowly and cautiously they began to descend the staircase.

They had nearly reached the bottom; only a few more steps between them and freedom, when—

A broad glare of light flashed upon them from an open door, and the harsh voice of the housekeeper exclaimed, as she roughly grasped Mattie:

"You don't escape from me as easy as that, young woman! And as for you," turning to the terrified Mary, "I will attend to your case after I have settled with this one."

"Now come on!" she exclaimed, pushing Mattie on before her, who, totally unnerved by the failure of her plans, had not the heart to say one word either of expostulation or entreaty.

The virago saw her again safely locked in her room, and then muttering to herself imprecations upon the head of the offending Mary, she started off to find her and vent her anger on her unresisting head.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT A LOSS.

THE first thing that Butts did after reaching the city was to go to a hydrant and wash his face, and then he went and had, as he expressed it, "a good square meal." A most

sensible proceeding, the reader will admit, for who is able to work upon an empty stomach?

Then, with a rueful countenance, as he thought upon the non-success of his mission, he started off for the residence of his employer.

What was his astonishment to find that Thompson had not been home for some days.

The news rather startled him at first, but being quite a philosopher, he reasoned:

"If the governor ain't able to take care of himself, then there is no one else that is able to take care of him, and I guess he is all right. Perhaps he has gone off on a hunt. If he has, I bet he won't have the bad luck that I have had, for if he starts after any one they are sure to be nabbed.

"I wonder how the sheriff feels this morning?" he chuckled, as the scene came distinctly up before his mind. "I guess if I had waited for that dispatch, I might have waited for some time, judging by present appearances.

"But now for my next move. I suppose Perry is in the city somewhere; but how am I to find him? That is what I would like to know.

"And now for it," he said to himself, determinedly, as he turned away from the house.

All day long he walked the streets of the city, tired and foot-sore, but still resolute. His was not a nature to be overcome by obstacles; they rather served to stimulate him on to fresh exertions.

Up one street and down another, strolling into saloons, bar-rooms, and restaurants; wherever there seemed to him to be even the most remote liability of finding his man or hearing any news of his whereabouts.

Toward evening he dropped into one of the Houston Street free-and-easys, and threw himself wearily on a chair.

His attention was attracted to a knot of men who were discussing the latest news.

"Did you hear of the shooting affair in West Street?" asked one of them.

"No," was the answer. "Who was it?"

"Why, it was the shooting of the famous Brooklyn detective. He was killed instantly—had a hole clean through his head."

Butts's heart leaped up in his throat, and his head grew dizzy as he heard these words, but by a strong effort he controlled himself and listened to hear more.

"How did it happen?" some one asked of the man who had first spoken.

"Well, I got my information from the *News*. It seems it was done in this way," and then he explained the matter as it was reported to be.

"What was his name?" asked a rough-looking fellow who stood listening to the conversation.

"He was generally called the Brooklyn Detective, but his name was Thompson. I guess we have all heard of him some time or other; but he will trouble none of us again—quite a loss to the police force of the city."

An expression of general satisfaction that they had one powerful enemy less was visible on the faces of those present as they heard the story.

Butts turned pale and weak as he listened to the conversation. The governor gone! Killed! Could it be possible? And staggering to his feet like a drunken man, he walked out of the bar-room in a half-dazed condition, like a man in a dream, who knows not whither he is going.

Where was now his hope of the future, and who would he have now to admonish him as to his best course? His best friend was gone, shot down in a moment, and he was left friendless and alone.

Coming to a newspaper stand, he bought a copy of the paper in question, and after a short search, he found the paragraph to which the man had alluded.

It was a brief statement, merely as reported by the police, and giving the station-house to which he had been taken.

Butts, wishing to hear more of the details, next bent his steps toward the station-house.

Arriving there, he inquired more minutely for particulars.

The captain in charge looked at him suspiciously, and asked him what he had to do with Thompson, and what business it was of his.

Butts replied that he was his aid, at which the captain laughed heartily, seeming to consider it an excellent joke.

To all further inquiries, Butts gave no answer, merely reiterating his original statement.

The captain finally came to the conclusion that there was something in what the boy said,

and he wrote a note to the superintendent stating his belief, and gave it to Butts, saying:

"I can give you no more information further than that which you have already read in the paper. But here is a note to the superintendent; perhaps he may be willing to tell you more."

Butts thanked him, and taking the note, he bid the captain adieu, and started down Mulberry Street to the superintendent's headquarters.

He found the gentleman in, and in as few words as possible he stated to him his business, and gave him the note from the captain.

The chief thoughtfully perused the note, and then closely watching Butts's countenance, he bid him go on with his story.

He listened attentively as Butts told him of the business that had lately engaged his time, of the trip in the country, and of its unsuccessful termination. He also wished to know more fully the nature of the business; but this the boy positively refused to reveal at present.

"Do you not know that I have the power to simply ring the bell, and in two minutes you can be placed under arrest?"

Butts replied that he did, but he could not by such means find out what he wished to know, as the secret did not belong to him.

"You are a safe man for a detective," he said at last, seemingly pleased at Butts's closeness on the subject. "And now," said he, "I will tell you the main points that you were hunting up."

And turning to a large file of papers, he took one off, and assured Butts by its contents that the whole business was known to him up to the time that the boy had left the city and the detective had met with his unlucky adventure.

Then he said to the boy:

"I believe your words, and I also believe you can keep a secret, so I shall now confide one to your keeping. Your master is not dead, but"—checking the boy's exclamation of joy—"he might as well be for all the use he will ever be to himself or others hereafter."

He then explained to Butts the detective's condition.

"Perhaps the sight of me will bring back his memory," said Butts, as the chief finished.

The chief approved of the idea.

He rang the bell and a man appeared.

"Send the doctor here," he ordered; and the man withdrew to obey him.

He presently entered the room, and to him the chief briefly stated the facts of the case.

The doctor decided that it was at least worth the trial.

The chief was deeply interested in the case, and the doctor professionally so, and they decided to go together.

Taking a carriage, they were driven to the house where Thompson was kept.

They found the object of their search seated in a chair by the window, listlessly turning over the leaves of a book which he held in his hand.

As they entered the room, he looked up and saluted them, asking them to be seated. But not the least recognition of them appeared on his countenance—not even when Butts grasped him by the hand and said:

"Don't you know me, governor? Don't you remember Butts?"

"Butts," said the detective, softly, as if he were turning the name over in his mind, "Butts! That's a queer name. No; I never heard it before. Who are you?"

A look of pain crossed the face of the boy as he saw his late guardian in such an unfortunate and childish position, and he made several more attempts to appeal to the detective's recollection, but all without avail.

Thompson would seem to make the attempt, but some obstacle would interpose, and he would give it up as hopeless.

The experiment had proved a failure, and Butts left the house disheartened.

"I want to see you again," said the chief to him as they separated; "I want to talk more with you upon this subject."

Butts promised him that he would do so, and he left him.

He had no definite object in view now, so he waited until night, and then he went to the theater in order to pass away the evening.

The next day he was off in another part of the city, in the hope of finding Perry.

Walking slowly, his watchful eye taking in everything and everybody at a glance, he at length saw a form ahead of him that he seemed to recognize.

It was Mr. Hawkins.

Butts quickly overtook him, and lightly tapping him on the shoulder, said that he "should like to have a few words with him in private, if he would kindly consent."

The old gentleman seemed surprised at such a request from an entire stranger; but looking in the boy's face closely, he seemed assured and acceded.

They then slowly walked on together.

Butts explained to him how Thompson had wished for a long time to see him, as he wished to confer with him upon an important matter, and that they had for some time past been endeavoring to find him.

"What did he want of me?" asked the gentleman in some surprise.

"I believe he wished to warn you against Sam Perry, whom he had heard was endeavoring to lay a plan to murder you," said the boy. "But let us stop in this restaurant for a few moments, and then I can better explain it all to you."

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. HAWKINS SURPRISED.

SLOWLY passed the days to Mrs. Sinclair, confined to the house by her mishap.

She had seen nothing more of Mr. Hawkins since her first interview, and now she grew daily more impatient at the restraint put upon her.

Her physician had informed her that she might go out in two or three days, provided she did not go far from the house, and she chafed at his delay.

At last the term of probation was over, and one pleasant morning she started out to see if possibly she might discover anything of the matter which weighed so heavily upon her mind.

She walked for some time, until warned by her ankle that her strength was failing.

Then she returned home, with her purpose no nearer its accomplishment than it had been when she first started out.

On her return, she was vexed to find that Mr. Hawkins had called in the interim, and had left his card, saying, however, that he would call again to-morrow.

Punctual to the minute, he came.

He gave her the information that Perry was somewhere in the city, as Butts had told him, and also told her that he had a lady with him, but as to his precise locality he had no knowledge, as they had been totally unable to discover it.

He also told her of the state of the detective's mind, and that so far they had been unable to restore his senses or find the cause of his accident, and telling her that all they had to depend on now was his aid, a youth of fifteen or sixteen, but who had the unbounded confidence of the chief of police, and was exceedingly smart.

The lady was quite overcome as she listened to these details, and it seemed to her as if Providence had once more forsaken her and left her to fight out this battle alone in her weakness. And to her the future looked dark and gloomy.

"What shall I do now?" she asked, appealing to Mr. Hawkins in her distress.

"There is but one course left open to us, and that is to see if the detective will remember us. It is the opinion of the physician that the only way by which he will recover his memory will be by the sight of some person or persons he seems to have upon his mind. Suppose we go and make him a visit?"

The lady consented to the arrangement, and in a few moments she was ready, and they were off for the detective's residence.

"I do not know as he will remember me," said Mr. Hawkins, after they had started, "for it is some years since I last saw him."

He was not aware of the fact that the detective had seen him.

"The last time I saw him was just after I had been so roughly handled by Perry's gang. He had a consultation with me to see if he could get any clew to the gang, but I believe he was unsuccessful, as I have never heard of their capture."

They had now reached their destination. But a few moments sufficed to convince them that their errand had been as fruitless as Butts's had been.

The detective did not recognize either of them by word or look.

He sat by the window, in the same position he had occupied on the former occasion, look-

ing every now and then in the street, as if expecting some one.

He had looked up expectantly as they entered, but seeing who they were, he turned away his head again with a strange, disappointed look upon his features.

He kept continually mumbling something about "the captain," but so indistinctly that they were unable to distinguish the words, and paid no more attention to their presence than if they were not in the room.

They made several attempts to establish in his mind some recollection of their faces; to all their questions he would simply answer:

"I don't know you," and turn again to the contemplation of the passers-by.

Their efforts were useless, and seeing them so, they at last gave up the attempt and withdrew, and returned to the lady's boarding-house.

For a long time they sat talking and endeavoring to solve the difficulties, but they could see no way out of them.

Tired and weary from his exertions, the old gentleman finally departed. Promising that he would do all he could, and that if anything new occurred, he would let her know of it as soon as possible, he bid her good-bye and started for his home.

It was a plain, unpretending house, situated in West Thirty first Street, with a simple plate on the door with his name inscribed thereon.

Having no pressing business on hand at present, he sat down by the window to read.

He had not been long engaged in the book when the bell rang, and a gentleman inquired if a clergyman lived there.

He was informed there was, and was ushered into the room where Mr. Hawkins was seated.

"I have come," said the gentleman, taking the seat that was offered to him, "on a somewhat singular errand.

"I wish to secure your services for a friend of mine who is about to be married.

"In some fit of eccentricity, this friend conceived the idea of being married in a mask, and also that all the parties at the ceremony shall be disguised in like manner.

"I can assure you that everything is right and proper, and for reference I can refer you to—"

He mentioned several distinguished men of the city, of whom, it is needless to say, he knew nothing, and had perhaps never seen them.

"I will further state," continued he, "that you will be well paid for your trouble. Can I depend upon you?"

"Did your friend send you to me?" asked Mr. Hawkins.

"No," was the reply; "he mentioned no one in particular—merely telling me to get a minister."

The old gentleman reflected for a moment.

Should he consent and go to the house, meanwhile giving information to the police, in order that if wrong was intended he might be able to frustrate it, or, would it be better that he refuse to have anything to do with it at all?

"But," he reasoned, "in case I refuse, perhaps they will not stop at that, but will provide some one without authority to perform the ceremony."

If wrong was intended, they would not stop for such a small obstacle, and the result might be much worse than if he had consented.

"On the whole," he thought, "I guess I had better go," and turning to his visitor, he said: "I will accept the charge."

"Very well," said the stranger, rising, "I shall call for you to-morrow at seven o'clock," and with a bow he retired.

The afternoon passed away, and in due course of time the night and the following day. Punctual to his appointment, the stranger appeared with a carriage.

Mr. Hawkins was ready, and no time was consumed in waiting; and seating himself by the side of his companion, they drove rapidly away.

Why it was that thoughts of the time when Perry had trapped him would come into his mind, he could not tell; but, do what he would, the recollection of that time would continually recur to him, and several times he felt as if impelled to open the carriage door and spring out; and once his hand even sought the knob with that intention, but something within seemed to restrain him, and he determined to see the matter through at all hazards.

"It will be necessary," said the stranger, "that you put on this mask now," producing one as he spoke, and putting it on the clergy-

man. "And that you may not know where the house is located, I must bandage your eyes for the present; but I assure that no harm is meant to your own person."

Mr. Hawkins at first objected, but finally consented to the arrangement, and his companion blindfolded him.

The stranger was expert at his business, and did not leave the least aperture through which the minister might see. There was not the faintest chance for him to use his eyes.

The carriage at length stopped, and the stranger led Mr. Hawkins into the house and removed the bandage from his eyes.

The mask remained on.

He could see that he was in a large, elegantly furnished parlor.

From here they were conducted into a smaller apartment, dimly lighted, in which room the ceremony was to take place.

"Who have you got?" asked the voice of the groom to the other in a whisper, but which Hawkins overheard.

"I have forgotten the name," said the other in the same low tone. "Are you all ready?"

"Yes."

The old clergyman felt strangely uncomfortable as the black, sparkling eyes were fixed upon his.

Involuntarily he compared him in his mind to a hideous snake, and the light form of the female beside him to some gentle dove that had been charmed with his baneful influence.

He felt decidedly averse to the whole proceeding, and those black eyes looking in his own seemed to compel him to go on in spite of himself.

He proceeded with the ceremony.

The man's voice was strong and full in the responses, and it seemed to the minister that he had at some time in the past heard it before. But the more he attempted to recall it to his memory, the more vague it seemed to him and unsatisfactory; so he gave it up, thinking he had been mistaken.

Old man, have not those eyes twice before looked into your own, and do you still fail to recognize them because a mask covers them? Does not the dread influence stealing over you warn you that they are the eyes of your mortal enemy?

Turning from the bridegroom, he addressed the bride:

"Do you take this man to be your wedded husband, to—"

"No!" was the answer, clear, distinct, and firm; "never, as God is my witness!"

The bridegroom started forward with a fierce exclamation on his lips.

As he did so, the mask dropped off, and revealed to the astonished eyes of Mr. Hawkins the scowling face of Perry, distorted with passion.

The discovery nearly overpowered him, it came so unexpectedly; but like a flash it entered his mind that everything now depended on his coolness, and by a powerful effort he recovered his usual composure, and glanced the other way, as if he had not noticed the falling of the mask.

Perry had instantly replaced it, and glanced sharply at him as if suspicious that he had seen the movement; but apparently reassured, he said lightly:

"Perhaps the lady is a little indisposed. I do not know but that it would be well to postpone this matter for a few days, until I have had a chance to repair the difficulty."

The lady in question cast a quick, angry glance upon him, but said nothing; she evidently feared him, from her manner.

Perry muttered something under his breath about something "was not strong enough," and turning to Mr. Hawkins, said laughingly:

"She has contrary fits at times, but she will be all right again in a few days, and I shall send for you again. For the present, take this, and after the affair is concluded I will make it more;" and he pressed a crisp bank-note into his hand.

His companion again subjected him to the blindfolding process, and conducted him to his carriage, and he was again driven back to his home, to cogitate upon the extraordinary manner in which he had been put upon the track of what he had so anxiously been seeking for the last few days.

CHAPTER XXX

WILSON LEARNS THE NEWS.

The next day after Wilson's arrival and interview with his employers, he started forth with

the captain on a visit to Mr. Templeton and Mattie.

He found the household in a state of the utmost confusion, and Mr. Templeton in a state bordering upon distraction.

Upon seeing Wilson he grasped his hand warmly, and endeavored to tell him everything at once, but his feelings were so strong, that he could not make himself thoroughly understood—only that there was something the matter, and that Mattie had some part in it.

Wilson saw that the old gentleman would be unable to tell him anything clearly while in that state, so he set himself to work to compose him, and succeeded so well, that he finally understood that Mattie had been on a visit to her cousin Green's, in Rhode Island, and that she had mysteriously disappeared from there, and that they had no clew whatever as to what had become of her, and he feared she had been murdered and hidden.

"What efforts have you made to trace her?" said the young man, repressing his feelings as far as possible, that he might not add to the father's anxiety.

"I have made every effort that has suggested itself to my mind. I have put detectives upon the track, and have spent money plentifully, but so far I have not had the least clew. My brain is almost crazed. I have had the woods around Cousin Green's searched, and have had the creek dragged, but no trace have I yet found. Everything has been done that money could do. What shall I do—what shall I do?"

Wilson was deeply affected, but he calmed Mr. Templeton's mind as well as he was able, and talked to him in a more hopeful strain.

The idea had already fixed itself in his mind that Perry was in some way implicated in the affair, and that the best thing to do was to find him first.

In the course of conversation he casually asked if he had seen Perry lately.

"Yes," replied Mr. Templeton; "he was here yesterday to condole with me, and offer his assistance; he seemed to feel very sadly about it; he is a feeling young man."

"He is a hypocrite!" hissed Wilson, but not loud enough for Mr. Templeton to hear. "I'll feel for him if he ever comes within my reach!"

At first he was tempted to tell him of all he knew about Perry, but he thought that he would only add to his grief.

Wilson took the old man's hand at parting, and said earnestly:

"Whatever happens, you may rely upon me. I am going to sift this matter thoroughly," he said in a voice of deep feeling.

"Thanks," said Mattie's father, in a voice of emotion. "I have just begun to appreciate you correctly. Perry, with all his sympathy, has made no effort to find my child."

"No wonder," thought Wilson; but he said nothing, and bidding him an affectionate farewell, they started out again, the captain to attend to some matter of his own, and the young man to go to the police headquarters, and give them his information and suspicions.

When he got there and stated the nature of his business, he was informed that the detective who was working up the case was out of the city, and would not return until the next day, and that it would be the best plan for him to call in when he could see him, as he had full power in the case.

So, in spite of all his impatience and anxiety, the young man was compelled to wait another day in idleness.

He walked back to the hotel, where he found Captain Studley busily engaged in writing, and not wishing to disturb him, he again started out, and went down to his employers' office.

Neither of the firm was in when he reached the office, and Wilson employed himself meanwhile by looking out into South Street with its ever-changing scene of activity—the forests of masts shutting off the view of the river, the busy trucks and toiling sailors loading the merchandise that was to go to every quarter of the globe, the newly arrived ships, with their precious cargoes of teas and spices from the Indies, the bustle and activity everywhere.

He was recalled from this scene by the opening of the office door, and Mr. Jones entered.

He was very glad to see Wilson, and after shaking hands, he sat down beside him.

They spoke for some time upon business subjects and other matters, and at last the conversation turned upon the late shipwreck.

Wilson referred to the strange manner in which Mr. Jones had acted when it was first related to him, and asked the cause, and also

what had happened when the steamer left the dock.

Mr. Jones was visibly embarrassed, and he stammered out something about a familiar face he thought he had seen, but which he had since thought he had been mistaken in.

It was evident that the subject was a painful one to him, and the young man was aware of the cause; but he deemed it to be his duty to tell all, and he related the confession of the dying man upon the sands, and described his personal appearance.

The young man had the impression in his mind that this man was his employer's son of whose wild ways he had heard so much, and who had caused his father so much anxiety.

During the recital, the old man pressed his hands to his throbbing temples, and moaned.

"Oh, my son! my son!"

It was indeed true; the man whom, if he had chosen, might have been well taken care of, had in early life fallen into vicious habits, and feeling ashamed to come back and ask pardon of one who would only be too happy to grant it, had chosen the other course, and bowed his father's head in grief by his conduct.

The young man waited till the paroxysm of grief had subsided. His heart was filled with pity for his sorrow, but he knew that his sympathy would be misplaced, so he did not offer it.

Finally his employer turned to him, and in a broken voice asked:

"You have told no one of what you have suspected, have you?"

William assured him on this point, telling him that no one would dream of there being any connection between them, as the confession said nothing about it at all.

"And what do you intend to do with the confession?" he asked.

"For certain reasons it has become of the utmost necessity that it be revealed, in order that a famous and notorious rascal may be caught."

"So be it then. And now, William, in a few words I will relate to you his history:

"At the age of thirteen he grew impatient of home restraint, and ran away to sea. For long, long years we heard nothing of him, and his mother grieved for him, until she died broken-hearted.

"After that I heard that he was in Savannah. I sent for him, but he would not come to me; if he had, he would not now be lying in the sands on the shore of the Atlantic.

"I heard no more of him until the day of your departure in the steamer, when I saw him upon the upper deck, and it was that that caused my agitation.

"It grieves me sore to think that my son should have acted so terribly."

"Do not fear," said the young man; "your secret is known only to me, and it is safe in my keeping."

"Thank you for that assurance," feelingly replied Mr. Jones. "I know you to be true and trustworthy."

The young man bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment, and was about to reply, when Mr. Perkins entered.

He greeted the young man as warmly as his partner had done before him.

William explained to them that, as he was not to go back for two weeks, he would like to have a week to himself, as he had a little affair of his own to attend to.

It was readily granted, and as he rose to leave, the elder partner, Mr. Perkins, addressed him in the following words:

"I have something to tell you, William, before you go. You have been in our service for a long term of years; in all that time, we have always found you to be truthful, reliable, and honest. Knowing the value of such qualities in a young man (I am speaking now in a strictly business point of view), and foreseeing that you will prove to be a solid, reliable business man, Mr. Jones and myself had a consultation about one month ago, and the result of it was that we came to the conclusion to take you into partnership with us. The news we intended to make known to you before, but for various reasons it was delayed.

"Hereafter, the firm will be known as that of 'Perkins, Jones & Wilson.'

"You are to carry on our business and look out for our interests in Savannah, as a branch partner, and I feel assured that in taking this step we have acted wisely, both for your interests and our own, which will hereafter be identical."

For some moments William was too much overcome by his emotion to say anything.

"It affords me great pleasure," said he, "to

find that my employers think so highly of my humble efforts in their behalf. It has always been my aim to do my whole duty for those who employed me, and I feel highly gratified that my efforts have met with so much approbation from you as to raise me to such a high position; and rest assured, dear sirs, that I shall not prove ungrateful to you for it.

"As I have been in the past, so shall I also endeavor to be in the future, ever watchful of my employers' interests, who have acted so generously toward me, for which I again thank you."

He became so affected that he could say no more.

"Nor is this all that is to be done for you," now said Mr. Jones. "As I am without living relations in this world, and wishing some one to profit by my wealth, I do now intend to make William my heir—"

"No! no! keep quiet," as Wilson was about to say something. "I have thought a long time on this matter, and do not act hastily, as you are now thinking I do.

"I have watched you very closely for some time past, and am convinced that you have contracted none of the vices which ruin so many young men of this day. Neither am I afraid that so much good fortune will turn your head or make you vain of your abilities."

The young man protested against this offer, as he was afraid that the sudden acquisition of so much wealth would be to him a burden, but his protests were of no avail.

A lawyer was sent for, and upon his arrival the necessary partnership papers were drawn up, and William was duly installed in the duties of his new position.

The financial basis of the firm was well known to him, as he had examined the books for them just previous to his departure for the South, and he knew the firm to be sound.

His instructions as to his mode of conducting the business were given him, and as he had nothing further to detain him, he bid his new partners "good-day," and left them.

Pleasant thoughts occupied his mind as he walked back to the hotel.

He would now be able to marry Mattie without objections on her father's part; but as he thought of her he remembered she was missing, and dark, bitter thoughts came in his mind regarding Perry.

It would have fared badly with that individual had the young man met him in his present state of excitement.

Reaching the hotel, he found Captain Studley at leisure, and to him he imparted the good fortune that had befallen him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN IMPORTANT ARREST.

We have seen how Mattie was detected in her attempt at escaping, and how it was frustrated; also of the subsequent attempt of Perry to force her into marriage, which requires explanation.

Perry, after being convinced that it was a harder matter to tame her than he had at first supposed, and fearing, from her brave manner, to attempt violence, lest she might have some weapon about her which she would not scruple to use, had at length resorted to other measures.

Knowing much of the nature of drugs from past studies, he had prepared a powder, which was mixed with her food. By means of this, which tended to deaden the faculties, and together with his own mesmeric power, which was great, he had hoped to succeed in controlling her.

It was his wish that the marriage should be genuine, for he hoped that in the position in life to which it would raise him he would be better able to carry out his nefarious work.

In order to prevent another attempt on her part, he had sent Mary O'Connor away. In order that she might not make the nature of the case known to outsiders, she was also closely watched.

His was a brain that took every precaution against surprise.

It seems that the drug had not been strong enough to overcome the excitement that Mattie labored under, and she was fully alive to her danger, though too much under influence to do anything to avert it until the final moment; and to Perry's vexation and rage, he saw his efforts had been futile.

Perry well knew that she would never consent while she was in the possession of her complete senses; but he was not a man to be balked by one failure.

He had Mattie conducted to her room again, and then he tried the effect of another drug,

more active in its power, as he was determined that in the next trial he would have no difficulty.

His idea of the minister who had attempted to officiate was a peculiar one, but, owing to his point of view, he was not to blame for misjudging him.

He deemed him to be one who either troubled himself little about the matter, or else he was one of those men that we find everywhere—men who care not what they engage in so long as they are well paid for their services.

It is difficult to say what would have been his thoughts had he known the clergyman's real object and his identity.

Having satisfied himself that the house was secure for the night, and giving instructions to his housekeeper, he left and returned to his den in West Street.

He was loudly greeted by the gang as he entered. They were busily engaged at their work, and the table was loaded with papers, dies, ink and other materials.

No questions were asked as to where he had been in his absence; their faces expressed repressed curiosity, but there was a look in Perry's eye which always checked impertinent questions.

Besides, they had so much confidence in his ability that they did not wish to anger him in any way, lest he might abandon them, and they could not possibly do anything without him.

Perry never satisfied them by any explanation of his movements, for he felt that it would lower his dignity to do so.

He now busied himself in examining plates, designs, etc., and by his quick eye detecting errors in a moment, and showing by his judgment that he was experienced in such matters.

Some of the men were boasting in his presence of the easy manner in which they had disposed of a large amount of it.

"Be careful, boys," said Perry, "or your recklessness will be the very means of getting you into trouble. 'Slow and sure' is always the best motto in this instance."

"I guess there is no danger," spoke one, "now that Thompson has kicked the bucket."

"And I heard to-day," put in another, "that the chief of police had endeavored to get Jemmy Pulcher to work up the job, but he refused, saying that he had retired from business, and did not wish to go into it again; so we have no one to fear."

The question was eagerly discussed for some time, and Perry detailed some of his men to act as amateur detectives, and find out all that was being done at headquarters.

This he had often done before, and had reduced it to a regular system, and was accepted by the gang as an unwelcome but necessary duty.

"Remember, boys," said Perry, in conclusion, "that if any of us are caught, the penalty for betrayal is death. Better for the man that is caught that he spend his time in prison, trusting to our influence to rescue him, than to betray us, and in some unguarded moment be suddenly stricken dead. What say you, men? Am I not right?"

"Ay, ay!" shouted the men; "that's the talk! Death to him who betrays us!"

Was it a presentiment of coming evil that prompted Perry to speak thus?

"Enough!" he said; "I am satisfied, and I doubt not we will all be careful to keep out of trouble."

So saying, he arose, and lightly bidding them good-bye, he left the den.

"I say, Jim," remarked one of the gang to his companion opposite, "the captain has got something weighty on his mind, in spite of all his light, easy manner. Haven't you noticed how strangely he has acted of late? I wonder what's the game he is up to?"

"I don't know, nor care," answered the person addressed, "so long as I don't get in any trouble on his account," and he gave a coarse laugh at what he had uttered.

"Well," said the first speaker, "that's my idea exactly; but I am in want of a thing or two in the way of clothes, so I am going to take a little walk and do a little shopping on my own account. Won't you come along?"

"I don't care to. I would rather take a good sleep. You know I was up nearly all last night."

"Well, I must go alone, then, I s'pose. So I'm off."

Proceeding to Broadway, he crossed over to the Bowery and walked down until he came to the large clothing warehouse of Brown & Co., which he entered.

"I wish to get a good suit of clothes," said he to the polite clerk who came to attend him.

After a careful examination he at length selected a suit that fitted him, and tendered in payment a one-hundred-dollar bill.

It is needless to say it was a counterfeit. The clerk carried it up to the cashier's desk, who examined it narrowly, and then pronounced it to be worthless.

Speaking in a low tone of voice to one of the clerks, he counted out the change slowly, and assisted himself in making out a bill, which, for an experienced penman, certainly took a long time in writing.

The clerk meanwhile had walked carelessly out of the store.

This movement was unperceived by the counterfeiter, who otherwise would have taken alarm.

At last the cashier had made out the bill, and, counting out the change, gave it to the clerk, saying, as he did so.

"Be ready, Charlie, if there should be any trouble."

The clerk gave him a wink, signifying that he understood him, and walking to where the man stood waiting, he gave him the change.

The man leisurely counted it out, and placed it in his pocket, the clerk watching him narrowly and forming his own opinion upon his coolness. Then taking the bundle under his arm, he walked out.

As he stepped out of the door a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice coolly said: "You are my prisoner. Make no resistance."

In an instant he apprehended his danger, and a fearful blow from his fist sent the policeman reeling to the ground.

Dropping his bundle, he started to run. It was a failure, however; for as he did so, a heavy club descended upon his head with crushing force, causing him to reel and stagger. And before he could recover his wits he was again seized and handcuffed. Further resistance would have been madness, and he quietly gave in.

"What's the matter?" asked an old woman of the clerk, who had followed him bareheaded out of the shop.

"Took something that did not belong to him," said the clerk, evasively, for he was sharp enough to see that it might do wrong in telling the whole truth.

"A thief! A thief!" shouted the crowd, yelling and hooting as they followed after him and his captors, as if they were new specimens of some strange wild animals. For anything out of the usual course is always sure to find its admirers in the drones of this great city.

And the two policemen, with the air of conquering monarchs, looked contemptuously upon the rabble, now and then menacing them with their clubs, and ordering them to "Keep back!"

In due course of time they reached the station-house with their prize; and the crowd, after gazing a few moments at the doors, as if in wait of new developments, finally grew tired and dispersed in search of some new excitement.

The captain ordered him to be searched, which was done; and resulted in the finding of six hundred dollars' worth of the same spurious money as that he had passed.

This condemned him at once, and the police felt assured that at last they had captured one of the band that had given them so much trouble. Of course the policemen making the arrest received all the praise, and the cashier who had put them on the track, none—which is the way of the world.

The prisoner requested that a note be sent to A. H. Burney, at a certain number which he gave. He declared he could prove his innocence, and go on bail for him.

The note was sent to the address named; but the messenger returned saying that the gentleman was out of town.

To all questions put to him he maintained a strict silence, and by no word or look did he betray anything that might be construed into guilt.

It was noticed that the prisoner, in spite of his bravado, grew more and more uneasy as the hours crept on.

A dispatch was sent to the superintendent's office stating the capture, and suspicions regarding him; and in reply they received an order to bring the prisoner to headquarters.

A close carriage was provided, and an escort of two armed policemen, lest he might have an inclination to attempt to escape.

Butts had been making a call on the chief, and was in the room when the prisoner was brought in.

The chief motioned to him that he might remain, a permission which Butts gladly accepted. "This is the man, sir that we think belongs to

the gang of counterfeiters," said the policeman in charge, as he ushered his prisoner into the presence of the chief.

Butts pricked up his ears at the remark, and was keenly attentive. An idea had entered his mind, and he waited impatiently till the superintendent should cease his examination and dismiss the prisoner from his presence.

The chief met with no better success in his examination of the prisoner than the captain of the precinct had done before him; but he felt convinced by his reticence that he was a guilty man.

Giving instructions that he be carefully guarded, he ordered him into confinement.

No sooner had he left the room than Butts told the chief of the fact that Thompson had been for some time upon the track of the gang, and that he had an idea that he had been shot by one of them for discovering some of their secrets. He proposed that the prisoner be brought into Thompson's presence, and see if it might not accomplish the end they were working for in the detective's mind.

"A very good suggestion," said the chief; and he immediately sent for Thompson to be brought to his office.

Butts remained in the office to see the effect of his proposed experiment.

After a short lapse of time, considering the distance they had gone, the messengers returned with the detective.

He was led into the room like a little child, and seemed to notice nothing that was going on around him.

Butts's face fully expressed the grief and pain he felt for his master's misfortune.

He was placed by the window, where the full glare of the light fell on him, making his pale face look almost ghostly in its whiteness.

"Send in the prisoner!" said the chief, abruptly.

As the man entered the room and saw the detective sitting at the window, he turned white to the lips, and staggered back, gasping:

"It's his ghost! it's his ghost!"

Thompson had listlessly turned round as he heard the door open; but no sooner had he seen the face of the prisoner than he sprang to his feet, exclaiming as he did so:

"My God! it's the man that shot me! Seize him! seize him!"

The moment had come. The detective's reason was again restored.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FIGHT IN THE DEN.

It was true; Reason had again returned to its throne.

The man who stood before him; cowering and trembling at the sight of one whom he supposed was in his grave, was the man who had fired upon him on that dreadful night, and who had seen him at his feet, weltering in his own blood.

"Don't let that man escape for your life!" said the detective, quickly, as the man was slowly edging toward the door.

One of his escorts immediately grasped him, and clapped the irons on his ankles, and he was led back to his cell, silent and dejected; he knew that there was no hope for him now, or the gang, either.

The chief congratulated Thompson upon his recovery, and Butts fairly danced with joy as he saw the success of his stratagem.

"I thought you were never going to get your senses," he said, shaking him by the hand, as if he would never get tired of the operation.

"Who first discovered me last night?" he asked as he put his hand up to the spot where the bullet had glanced, and, to his astonishment, could find no abrasion, even of his skin.

It seemed to him that it was the evening before that he had met with the accident.

When he was told that nearly two weeks had passed since that time, he could hardly believe their evidence, and could hardly be brought to realize that so much time had been lost to him. The interim was to him all a blank.

He was now asked to relate how it was that he had been attacked, but owing to his professional instinct he preserved silence on this point, merely saying in answer to their inquiries that they would know all in a few days, and that, meanwhile, they must wait, and they would hear of one of the best "takes" they had known for many years; and with the answer they were forced to be satisfied.

Some of them shook their heads knowingly, as they said:

"I tell you there's something heavy on the car-

pet when he says so," which remark was generally assented to.

After a long consultation, at which none but the detective, the chief, and Butts was present, their arrangements were at last made.

Thompson heartily approved of his chief's action in reporting him as dead, as by that means he would be able to carry on the work, whereas, had they known the truth, they might have taken flight and spoiled the game.

A posse of six detectives in citizens' dress, and heavily armed, were ordered to be ready for service at eleven P. M., and were told to preserve the profoundest secrecy about it if they wanted "to see fun," as he termed it.

The detective and Butts remained in the office, and their suppers were brought to them.

The time passed pleasantly enough, and the hour for operations arrived.

Butts was also with them, as Thompson said he wished to show "the dark side of the business."

The prisoner, heavily ironed, was brought out and placed in a carriage, together with the detective and two of his aids.

The carriage drove slowly off in the darkness, and the remainder of the aids, attired in different disguises, sauntered carelessly after it.

A passer-by would have no idea, from their appearance, that they were bound on a dangerous errand.

Arriving within a block of the house in West Street, the carriage stopped, and they alighted.

The detective and Butts went on ahead, both disguised, and the boy had his instructions what to do.

The prisoner, with a cloak thrown over his shoulders to hide his handcuffs, followed at a little distance behind, and the aids rapidly closed up in the rear.

The detective and Butts walked leisurely into the house and up to the bar.

There was no one in the room but the old hag whom he had seen before.

"Give us a mug of beer, old woman," said the detective, in a gruff voice.

"Yes, sir," replied the woman, scanning him sharply before she turned round and stooped to draw it.

In an instant Butts had lightly sprung behind the bar, with a drawn revolver, and holding it dangerously near the old woman's head, he whispered quickly:

"Don't you open your mouth to yell, old woman, for if you do you will get something in you that will not digest well. Do you understand?"

The old woman, paralyzed with fear, nodded her head in acquiescence, and Butts produced a gag, which he applied in an artistic manner to the old hag's mouth.

Meanwhile, the aids had closed up around the door, and the prisoner was brought in.

"Good," said the detective, nodding approvingly.

Two men were now left in the place to guard it from intruders, while the rest prepared for the attack.

Thompson coolly examined his revolver to see that it was in good condition, and assuring himself of the fact, he took it in his right hand, and with the left he firmly grasped the prisoner by the collar, and ordered him to lead on.

The man demurred a little at the order.

"Look here," said the detective, touching the cold muzzle of the revolver to his temple, and speaking in a low, deadly earnest tone, "I don't want to shoot you down in cold blood, but if you don't go on peaceably and open the door, and give us the pass-words, I will do so. We intend to go in where the gang is, and are bound to do so. Understand me?"

The man wanted badly to refuse to obey, but he knew that to do so would be to sign his own death-warrant; and hard as was the duty, he saw there was no escape, and said:

"All right! but you are going to your death; there are four to one!"

This was not the truth, but he hoped it would deter them from making the attack for a few minutes, and meanwhile the gang might take alarm.

The detective saw the lie in his face, and merely said, sharply:

"Move on!"

The whole party descended the stairs noiselessly, and reached the spot which led to the door.

"Open!" said Thompson, in a whisper.

The man stooped and pressed a spring in the floor, causing what seemed to be a solid wall to fly back, and revealing a long, narrow passage-way.

A dark lantern was brought into requisition, and they again moved forward.

Reaching the door, the prisoner hesitated for a moment, but the grasp on his arm tightened, and giving a peculiar knock, he whispered the word "Fulton!"

The next instant the door flew open, and the police sprang into the presence of the astonished detective.

They were seated at the table, busy at their work, and were completely taken by surprise.

Seeing their position, they sprang to their feet, and seized their pistols.

"Traitor!" exclaimed the lieutenant in charge, aiming at the unfortunate prisoner, who hung his head.

"Hold!" shouted the detective; and the faces of the gang turned white with fear, as, stripping off his disguise, the detective stood before them.

"The first man that raises a hand to fire a shot, dies!" said he.

"Better death than capture!" said the leader; and quick as thought he fired at the detective. His aim was unsteady, and the bullet went wide of the mark.

Butts raised his arm. A flash, a loud report, and when the smoke cleared away, the form of the leader lay still in death!

The bullet had pierced his brain!

"Let's fight it out, boys!" shouted one of the gang; and simultaneously they made a rush for the police.

Then ensued a scene that beggars description; knives and pistols being used in profusion.

At the first indication of resistance one of the police had sprung to the door, shutting it, and placing his back against it, thus preventing the possibility of any escape.

The advantage was on the side of the police, as by their sudden appearance they had taken the gang by surprise, and many of them without arms.

They had no intention, however, of yielding; for they knew if they were taken that their doom was sealed.

They fought like demons, making frantic attempts to cut their way through, and open the door to escape.

One burly ruffian, with a drawn knife, sprung at the detective, who was already engaged in combat with another.

"Take that!" he shouted, with a fearful oath, as he raised the long blade for a heavy stroke.

Even as he said the words, a bullet from the revolver in Butts's hands stretched him out, and his arm fell harmlessly.

The fight was fierce but of short duration. The police were well disciplined, and in a short time the whole gang was handcuffed, and with broken heads and bloody faces, prepared to leave the den.

Two of them had been killed outright, and several more were badly wounded.

The police had received but a few slight wounds, and the detective slightly cut in his right arm.

He thought nothing of it, however, and in fact had not noticed it until his attention had been called to it by Butts.

He was filled with exultation at the complete success of his plans.

There was only one thing wanting to complete his satisfaction.

Perry, the chief of them all, and the man above all others that he wanted to get hold of, was absent, and he feared that he would be too sharp to walk into any trap that might be laid for him.

A plan was already formed in his mind, which he intended to put immediately into execution, and in which he had a reasonable hope of success.

The next thing to be done was to examine the den, and Thompson immediately proceeded to do so.

They took possession of the plates, dies, paper, engravers' tools, and everything connected with the business, and placed them in a pile for transportation to headquarters.

In one corner of the den stood Perry's safe. Thompson's eyes brightened as he saw this,

for there was something he hoped to find in it, which was locked.

"Break it open!" commanded Thompson; and the aids proceeded to do so.

The safe was old, and the lock was not one of very intricate construction, and they soon succeeded in forcing open the door.

It contained a large amount of genuine money, gold and notes.

In one corner was a number of documents tied in a bundle. These the detective seized, and examined them eagerly.

He uttered a cry of delight, as one by one he

unfolded them, and examined their contents eagerly.

"It was what I have been hoping for," he said to those that stood around him; "it's a clew to something else I am working up."

Then he carefully tied them up again, and carefully thrust them in an inner pocket.

Giving orders in regard to the spoils, and taking charge himself of the contents of the safe, they started off with their prisoners for headquarters. Two of the men were left to guard the place and arrest any one who should enter the house.

It was about one o'clock when they arrived at the station-house, having met but two or three on their way.

The prisoners were immediately placed in close confinement, and the detective went up to the chief's room to make a report to him of his success.

When Mr. Hawkins was left at his own door, he lost no time in visiting Mrs. Sinclair, and acquainting her with the information he had obtained.

Mr. Hawkins suggested that it would be advisable to get the detective's aid, who, though but a youth, was decidedly smart.

Mr. Hawkins advised her to go with him, and she was soon ready to set out.

A knock was just then heard at the door, and in answer to the invitation, the door swung open, revealing to their astonished eyes the form of the detective.

"How do you do," said he, with a curious grin of delight at witnessing their surprise.

"Thought I was played out, didn't you? Well, you see, I am harder to use up than they think I am."

Then he shook hands with them, and they all sat down again, the lady removing her wraps with an air of relief, as she said:

"We were just going out to find your aid to assist us, as we had given up hope of you."

A strange look stole in the detective's eyes as the lady spoke of his aid, and he looked at her as if about to say something, but he turned it off with the remark:

"You would have had a good worker if you had got him. And now, what is the business? Perhaps I can attend to it nearly as well as he can."

Mr. Hawkins then acquainted him with the facts he had just previously confided to the lady, to all of which the detective listened with his usual keen attention.

After he had finished speaking, Thompson said:

"This is a grand move on his part, and no mistake. I never knew Perry but that he had some devilry on hand; but this beats all I have known of him for some time. The questions in this case are these: Who is this female he is trying to coerce into marriage? and for what purpose? To the first question, I confess I am entirely in the dark. To the second, I believe that it is property and position that he is after, for money seems to be the grand aim of his life."

Then he astonished them by relating the particulars of the capture of his gang, and their utter failure, as usual, in catching Perry.

"On the whole," said he, in conclusion, "I am not very sorry that he happened to be absent when we called, for he wields such a powerful influence over his men, that they would have fought like devils, and we had work enough even as it was."

An arrangement was then entered into by which the detective was to be informed the instant a carriage should call again for Mr. Hawkins, and he was instructed to go speedily and quietly, and that he (the detective) and his men would be there on time to prevent further trouble.

Upon leaving Mrs. Sinclair, Mr. Hawkins went to Wilson's former boarding-house to see him.

He was dismayed to learn that he had sailed for Savannah.

The landlady gave him the address of Wilson's employers, and he went down to see them and learn his address.

He stated his business to one of the firm.

"Mr. Wilson, who is now our partner, is in the next room. I will call him in."

He did so, and as the young man entered, he exclaimed, delightedly:

"The very man, above all others, I most wished to see. I was just thinking of you. Your time expired to-day."

The young man then explained to him the cause of his anxiety, and in return Mr. Haw-

kins acquainted him with his stock of information, and thus the missing clew was found on both sides.

The young man found out what he had strongly suspected, namely, that Mattie was in the hands of Perry.

Wilson, full of excitement with the news he had just heard, hastily put on his hat and started off with Mr. Hawkins at a speed which that gentleman found difficult to keep with him, and directed their steps to the hotel.

To Wilson's delight, they found Captain Studley in, and to him the young man imparted the information already gained, and introduced Mr. Hawkins as the gentleman who had left the papers in his possession.

The captain bowed to him rather coldly at first, as it was not exactly clear in his mind as to the way that he had acted in the matter, and he waited for the explanation.

"I must be as brief as possible," said the gentleman, hurriedly, "as there is no time to be lost. At another time I can tell you all the particulars at leisure."

He then stated briefly, and to the point, the whole truth of the matter, and the legality of the marriage ceremony.

"So you see," said the gentleman, "of how much importance this paper was. The nature of the others I will explain at another time."

"Let us go immediately and see Mr. Templeton, and relieve his anxiety a little."

They agreed, and together they proceeded to his residence, and were ushered into his presence.

Now introduced, Mr. Hawkins and they sat down together, to compare notes between them.

Mr. Templeton was speechless with rage and astonishment when it was shown to him by such strong proofs what was the real character of the man whom he had placed such unbounded confidence in. He expressed in bitter terms the opinion he held of him, and threatened that he should feel the full extent of the law when they caught him.

The party then separated for the day, the minister returning home to await developments, and the others returned to their hotel.

Mr. Hawkins was to see the lady next day and acquaint her with the fact of her father's presence in the city.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CLOUDS BREAKING.

When Mattie was conducted back to her room, after the interruption of the ceremony, she was left by her attendant, without a word, to her own reflections.

They were not of the most pleasing character, for she saw the danger gathering thicker around her, while her chances of escape grew less each day.

She saw that Perry had determined to marry her, and she knew him well enough to feel that he would leave no means untried to accomplish his object.

She shuddered at the thought of becoming the wife of such a villain.

"If I could only get a line to my father!" she thought. "What will he think of me? But it must not be!" she exclaimed with sudden energy. "If there be any means under heaven by which I can balk this villain's plans, if by any exertion on my part I can avert this terrible evil, I will do it, if I die in the attempt. Better by far to do so than to live as his wife; for me it would be a living death!"

"God forbid that he should prosper in his wickedness and go unpunished. Oh, that Justice would overtake him ere he again forces his hated face in my presence! If that preacher was a true one"—and her cheeks blanched at the thought of his being an impostor—"he would not allow such proceedings to go on, much less to lend his aid in Perry's behalf. I must appeal to him the next time he comes."

"Oh, if I could but keep my eyes away from Perry's! He has a subtle influence about him which I am almost powerless to resist. And I feel I have been growing weaker every day since I have been in this house. Can it be that he is drugging me? Merciful God!" she gasped, "it must be so; nothing else could have affected me in this way. I must beware of it hereafter."

"And these robes!" she said scornfully, glancing at the bridal outfit laid out near her, but which she had not worn, "they seem like a shroud to prepare me for the grave;" and she shivered at the idea her own fancies had conjured up.

Then she walked to the door, and again examined the lock.

But it resisted all her endeavors to open it, and she gave up the attempt in despair.

The housekeeper then came in with her meal. "And you are growing sulky, are you?" said she. "Don't want to become Mrs. Perry, eh?" as Mattie still remained silent. "Well, I'll tell you, young woman, you ought to be thankful that he is willing to do that much for you, and I would advise you to be more civil to him, for he is not one that would hesitate to do as he likes, if he has an object to gain. He has got money enough to satisfy even such a lady as you make out to be. To my knowledge, his safe down-stairs is stuffed with bank-notes, and he spends them freely too."

Mattie listened in silence to this long harangue, and determined as a last resource to make one more appeal to her, and see if she had one soft spot in her hard heart.

"Woman," said she, rising and looking her fairly in the eyes, "would you wish me to perjure myself? would you have me marry a man whom I can not even respect, much less love? A man whom I hate with all the strength of my soul! Do you suppose I could for one moment live under the same roof with him as his wife. Are you a woman, and ask me to yield to him? Put yourself in my place, and ask yourself what you would do under the same circumstances. No! sooner than do it, I would hurl myself through that window, and be picked up a corpse on the stones beneath!"

The housekeeper seemed disconcerted, her eyes turned to the window apprehensively, as if she feared Mattie would make good her threat, and when she spoke again, it was in a more conciliatory tone.

"It's not as bad as you think it is," said she. "Mr. Perry is a gentleman; to be sure, he is a little fast, and also savage at times if he happens to be vexed; but other men are all the same, and I know you would feel very bad if you thought you were never going to be married. You are only nervous, and what you require is rest and food; this that I have brought you is some that was prepared under Mr. Perry's own directions. He seemed to be very anxious about your welfare, and said he hoped it was but a slight indisposition that you would soon get over."

The words about the food recalled Mattie's suspicions, and she felt that she had hit the truth. She saw from the woman's words that her appeal had been in vain, and her hopes sunk.

"But what is the matter with you?" exclaimed the woman, as she sprung forward and caught the girl in her arms, just in time to prevent her falling to the floor.

Mattie had fainted.

After a great deal of exertion, she finally succeeded in restoring her to consciousness, and what little of womanly sympathy still remained in her heart was brought to the surface, as she saw the pale, sad face resting so helplessly upon her shoulder. It was enough to have touched a heart of adamant.

When she again spoke, it was with a much more gentle tone than she had ever before used toward her.

"I am sorry that you take it so to heart," she said, "and if you keep on in this way, you will make yourself very ill; and I would advise you, as a friend, that you keep your strength as much as possible. It will be for your own good. I see that you understand my meaning."

As she reached the door, she turned, and, in a low voice, as if she feared the effects of the intelligence on Mattie's already overtaxed strength, she said:

"Mr. Perry says you are to be ready for the ceremony by half past ten to-morrow night."

"Oh, save me!" cried Mattie, in despair; "help me to escape from this terrible house! My father is wealthy, and will reward you handsomely. Do not leave me in the clutches of this man!"

"Stop!" exclaimed the woman, glancing apprehensively toward the door, as if she feared some one were listening there. "Don't talk to me in that despairing way. It would be dangerous for me to do as you wish me to. Mr. Perry holds a secret of my life, and if I should even attempt to aid you, he would have a fearful revenge upon me. Besides, even did you reach the door, you could not possibly go further. There is a terribly fierce dog running loose in the yard, that even I dare not go there. There is also a man constantly on watch before the house, by the master's orders; so you see that I could not help you, if I tried. I have thought of late that some one has been dogging my footsteps, lest I should make an attempt like the one Mary O'Connor failed in, but I am much too cowardly to do that when he holds such a power

over me. And now, dry your eyes, miss, seeing that crying will not help you in the least, and plan what you may for to-morrow night;" and stooping over her, she whispered: "If I see a good chance then to help you, without involving myself in trouble, I will do so."

"God bless you for even those few words," breathed Mattie, fervently, as the woman closed and locked the door behind her.

As Mattie sat thinking, she felt a strange apathy creeping over her.

She no longer seemed to care for the future, or what she had already passed. Strange, weird shadows seemed to dance before her eyes.

What could it mean?

The truth flashed upon her mind: she had been drugged heavily, lest she might escape.

It was in vain that she endeavored to rise and shake off the feeling of drowsiness, but it was too late, and after a few more ineffectual attempts, she sunk back upon the sofa in a deep sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE BIRTH-MARK.

After leaving the rest of the party, the detective started down-town, crossed the river, and went to his own room.

He was unperceived by the landlady, and so he evaded a scene that would have ensued had she seen him, for she had heard the report of his death, which was the first intimation that she had of his real character; but still feeling undecided about his identity, as there were so many of the same name, she had left the room intact, and he found it exactly the same as it was when he had last left it.

He now busied himself in summing up the evidence that he had already collected.

This he proceeded to do immediately, for he had not much time to spare, as he would have to return immediately, so as to be ready for an emergency.

"Well," he said softly to himself, after he had finished his task, "I feel satisfied in my own mind that the end is fast approaching. Perry can not escape me now, and the net is closing around him rapidly. Little did I think, when I first saw him, that he had so much to do with the case. I had a job before I thought of him, or knew he was in the city."

Looking at his watch, he was surprised to see that it was nearly eight o'clock.

"Pretty nearly time for that boy to make his appearance, I think," said he, tying up the papers carefully together, and placing them in his pocket. "I am particularly anxious that he should not disappoint me to-night."

A peculiar rap announced the presence of the individual who had just occupied his thoughts.

The detective opened the door, and Butts walked in, and seated himself in a large easy-chair.

His face wore an anxious care-worn expression, which was not unnoticed by the detective.

"What is the matter, Butts?" he asked, kindly, "you look disheartened."

"I feel so," replied the boy, with a faint attempt at a smile, which failed miserably. "The fact is, I can't say that I really like the business, after all; there is too much blood shed in it; not that I care for the danger to myself, for that thought has not entered my mind, but I don't like so much shooting. I don't want to hunt down human beings, even for justice, and I may yet be the cause of making an innocent man suffer. After we have finished this job, I wish you would let me go into some other business."

"What has caused this change in your feelings, Butts?"

"I can not exactly tell. I have been thinking of it for some time back; and only the other day I read of a man hung on circumstantial evidence, which seemed clear as noonday, and tracked up by the detectives. The man died, professing his innocence to the last. The case occurred about a year ago, and it was only within a month ago that the real murderer, when dying, acknowledged his guilt, thus showing conclusively that an innocent man had been hung for another's crime. After reading that, I came to the conclusion that I would quit the business, and earn my living in some other manner."

"I guess you are about right," said the detective, as the boy ceased speaking, and awaited his answer. "I guess you are about right. I have been thinking the same thing myself, and as for the case you speak of, I know all the particulars, though I was not engaged in it, and I had no doubt in my mind of the man's guilt when he was hung; since then I learned the truth, and by

the least error on the part of the detective worked up the case—such an error as I or any one else might have made—the wrong man was taken and hung.

"This last narrow escape of mine has confirmed my resolution to give up the business, and with the means I have I shall be able to settle down comfortably for the rest of my days."

"But you know that I never leave anything undone, and therefore I must finish what business I now have on hand. I have seen Captain Studley, from whom the bonds were stolen that I am searching for. He is now in the city, and I have been introduced to him; but he did not know that I was the one that had the business in hand. I know who has the bonds, and in a few days I shall have them placed in the owner's hands."

"As to your suggestion of entering into other business, I think it is an excellent idea, and shall, as soon as practicable, take steps to secure you a good position where you may become a useful member of society."

"Thank you for your kindness," said Butts, with a pleasant expression, taking the place of the former dejected one.

"But," said the detective, "I wish to question you now with regard to a few other points referring to other matters, which I would like you to explain. In the first place, I will ask you, do you remember anything of your parents?"

A blush of shame mantled the fair face of the youth, as he replied:

"I do not."

"Do you remember who put you in charge of Mrs. Grimes?"

"Yes," replied the boy, "and that was the same woman I frightened so at the den in West Street; but she did not recognize me. A man named Jerry brought me to her. I think his last name was Williams—Jerry Williams—but I am not positive."

"Why did you leave Mrs. Grimes?"

"Because she wanted me to steal for her, and because I refused she used to beat me."

"Did she ever say anything to you to intimate that she knew either of your parents?"

"No; but she had a small box which she kept always locked, and one day I suddenly surprised her as she was looking in it. There was a baby's dress and other things, and a small chain and a locket attached. She put them away in a hurry when she saw that I was there, and that was the last that I ever saw of them."

"Was the box anything like this one?" asked the detective, displaying one as he spoke.

"It is the same one," replied the boy, after examining it closely, but looking in vain for the lock.

The detective took it again, and placed it back in the same place from which he had taken it.

"Would you like to know who your parents are, and if they are yet living?"

"I should like to know and find my mother," and his voice trembled perceptibly as he uttered the tender word. "But as for my father," and his voice again grew hard, "I always feel somehow as if he were the cause of all my troubles, and that if he had been an honest man he would not have deserted me in this way. I have a presentiment that if I ever meet him it will be as an enemy. But why do you ask me these questions—do you know anything concerning them? Do you know where I can find my mother?" and his voice again grew tender.

"I do not wish to raise false hopes in your mind," the detective said, earnestly, "but I think—and have good grounds for it—that I shall soon be able to introduce you to both your father and mother."

"Tell me of them," said Butts, eagerly, his restless manner betraying his anxiety to hear of them.

"I will," replied Thompson; "but first I wish to be satisfied on another point. Have you a small red scar upon your left arm, just below the shoulder?"

The youth took off his coat, and rolled up his sleeve, displaying a small red spot, somewhat resembling a crescent or half moon.

"I am right," the detective briefly said; "and now I will gratify your desire, and give you your history in as few words as possible."

About sixteen years ago your father first met your mother in Savannah. Being attracted by her beauty, he became acquainted with her, and as he was a man of pleasing exterior, he soon won her heart. He proposed, and was accepted, and now comes in his villainy. Not wishing to be encumbered with a wife, and yet wishing to obtain a share of her father's wealth,

he planned and carried into execution a mock marriage."

The boy's eyes flashed, and his teeth clinched fiercely together.

"Restrain yourself," said Thompson, "till you are all."

"By a mistake on the part of one engaged in the plot, or rather by the compunctions of conscience, as he was nearly dying, a real minister was substituted, unknown to Perry, and consequently the marriage was in all respects a perfectly legal one, and the proofs of that marriage are still preserved, and ready to be produced at the proper time."

"Your father, finding that he could not succeed as well as he had hoped with his father-in-law, shortly after committed an act which rendered it necessary that he should make himself scarce for a time, and he left, deserting your mother, whom he informed of the—as he supposed—illegal marriage, and taking you, though still an infant, with him. He went from Savannah to various cities, still followed by your mother, whose only desire was to get possession of you, whom she loved with all the ardor of a mother's affection."

The boy's eyes grew dim and misty as he listened, and he nodded his head to go on.

"Reaching New York, he kept you for awhile, but finally tiring of you, in the excitement of something else he was engaged in, he finally left you in charge of Mrs. Grimes; nor did he seem to have taken any trouble to have you found when he heard you had run away from her."

"You will see by this that he is a man of very evil ways, and, in fact, a desperate man if brought to bay, and I have that disagreeable duty to perform; so do not look for perfection in him when you find him."

"I care nothing for him," said the youth; "for, after the manner in which he has treated my mother and myself, I would be more than human if I should now have any affection in my heart for him. But you say he is now in the city?"

"He is."

"And my mother—what of her?"

"As I before told you, she tracked your father from place to place, but without success, for Perry was kept informed of her whereabouts; and when he feared discovery, he would leave and go somewhere else, and so he eluded her continually."

"However, she tracked him to the city, and his spies lost sight of her at Philadelphia. She is now in the city, and I have seen her."

"You must not ask me any more questions at present, for I shall tell you the rest at the right moment; and now let us finish the business we have in hand. We must return immediately to New York, as I must find out if Perry has walked into the trap we laid for him at the den, which I think is improbable."

They left the house together upon their errand, Butts, meanwhile, relating to his master the particulars of his trip in the country, and the ill-success he had met with.

"You did right," said Thompson, after laughing heartily at the description of the exciting chase by the sheriff. "But, as usual, Perry proved himself too smart a tactician to be caught. What a pity that such splendid talents should have been misdirected! He might have been a man of position to-day had he chosen the right course; but so it is, boy. Though they may meet with success for a brief season, yet sooner or later they must invariably meet with their deserts at the hands of justice."

They had now reached the door and found, as the detective had anticipated, that no one had been there since the capture.

Thompson then took Butts into the vault that he had been confined in, and showed him the manner in which he had made his escape through the ceiling, and drawing himself again through the aperture, he emerged again into the bedroom, which was now deserted.

Butts followed him, and they walked out, somewhat startling the men on guard, as they were not looking for their appearance in that direction. Thompson explained it to them, and having nothing further to detain him, he and Butts posted off to the house where the detective had taken board, and which stood immediately opposite the residence of Mr. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SPRINGING THE TRAP.

No messenger appeared that night to take Mr. Hawkins, and the next day a party consisting of

Mr. Templeton, the detective, Mr. Hawkins, and Captain Studley, met at the house of Mr. Templeton to discuss their final plan of action.

Wilson had been away on a search, and now came in pale and tired, to report his failure in the attempt.

They wished to send for the lady, but the detective objected to this, saying that he would produce her at the proper moment, and he would rather allow her to remain quiet until that moment should arrive.

It was agreed that he should have his own way in the matter, and they dismissed the subject.

The detective then explained to Captain Studley that he was working up the case of his stolen bonds, and that he had succeeded in obtaining them, and would turn them over to him when he caught the thief, which he soon hoped to do.

The captain expressed himself as satisfied with the arrangement, and it was agreed that they should all hold themselves in readiness to be called at a moment's notice, and he thought that it would occur that night, as he anticipated that Perry would be anxious to finish the job as quickly as possible.

Just then Butts entered the room, his face radiant with exultation.

"I have found the house," he exclaimed, "for I have seen Perry, and tracked him to it; it is No. 454 West — Street."

This news raised a great excitement in the company, they all being—with one exception—anxious that they should immediately proceed there and make the arrest.

"Softly," said the detective. "You know not the kind of man you have to deal with. Should we go there in broad daylight, we should only give him warning in time to escape us, and perhaps he may not be there now, anyway. We must let him plot on and not spring the trap till we are sure of him. Let everything go on as before, and now that you know the number of the house, we shall have no difficulty. When I send you word, drive immediately to his house, I will see to the rest. I am fully as anxious as you are to take him, but I want to go about in the right way."

They all saw the force of his reasoning, and then Mr. Hawkins, Butts, and the detective departed.

Mr. Hawkins went to his home, and the detective and Butts went to the lady's house and got her to go to the house with them, that she might be ready when the occasion required.

At the request of the detective she wore a heavy veil, as he did not wish her to be recognized. Then they returned to the detective's temporary boarding-house.

Butts looked upon the lady with a deal of sympathy, but no thought of the truth entered his mind.

Slowly the long day wore away.

Thompson had provided a lad who was to bear the message to the other party when the time arrived, and kept him by him.

Mr. Hawkins passed the day in reading, and toward ten o'clock the sharp peal of the door-bell roused him to his feet, and informed him that the moment for action had at last arrived.

Looking out of the window, he saw a coach standing at the door.

The night was a dark one, a fit night for the work proposed.

The man who had called on him at the first occasion again entered.

"Are you all ready?" he asked.

"I am," said the clergyman, as he took up his hat. "How is the night?" asked the clergyman, as he carried the lamp from the center-table and placed it on the mantel, where it could be seen by the detective opposite.

It was the signal that had been agreed upon. He purposely delayed as long as possible, that they might gain more time, but at last announced that he was all ready.

"Then come on," and they descended the steps and took their seats in the carriage.

But a few words were exchanged between them; the minister was very busy with his own thoughts, and his companion seemed equally occupied.

The same operation of masking and blindfolding was gone through with before the carriage stopped, and when the mask was removed he stood in the same room that he had been ushered into on his first visit.

Then they retired to the room where the scene had occurred before, and the persons present were attired the same as on the former occasion, with the exception of the bride, who was now

attired in white, and wore a bridal-veil over her mask.

She seemed to be oblivious of all that was transpiring around her, and her eyes, by some strange magnetic influence, were fixed upon Perry, whose black, glittering ones glowed like some beautiful but dangerous serpent.

Perceiving the clergyman standing there, he said:

"Proceed with the ceremony, sir, if you please," but he did not remove his gaze from the bride.

Mr. Hawkins opened the book, and occupied some time in looking for the proper place. His purpose was to gain time.

"Are you going to be all night about it?" angrily exclaimed Perry.

At the sound of his voice Mr. Hawkins started suddenly, and accidentally dropped the book.

After a short time spent in finding the place, he again began, in a slow, solemn, measured tone, to read.

His mind was full of anxiety. Could it be that they had by any accident been detained? And how should he act if it came to the point, for, to go through with it, he was determined he would not.

"Do you take this woman to be your married wife, to have—"

"Hold!" exclaimed a clear, cool voice, as the door flew open, and the detective, followed by his friends, entered the room, cutting off every avenue of escape.

The minute the bride saw the new-comers she uttered a glad cry:

"William, dear William!" and fainted in his arms.

"Trapped!" muttered Perry, under his breath, and his hand stole stealthily toward his inside pocket.

The detective saw the movement, and drawing his own revolver, warned him to desist.

Perry saw it would be madness to attempt it while the detective's eye was upon him, and with a bitter laugh he asked what they meant by their intrusion.

"It means," replied Thompson, "that first of all we forbid the bans of this marriage, as you are already a married man."

"'Tis false. I call for the proofs."

"You shall have them: First, Mr. Hawkins, whom you once attempted to murder."

Perry turned pale, as the clergyman, removing the mask as his name was called, revealed himself to the astonished eyes of the stricken man.

"Again," said the detective, "your wife is present, and your boy."

The lady raised her veil, and Butts, who now saw through the whole scheme, with a glad cry of:

"Mother! thank God I have found you at last!" sprung into her arms and embraced her tenderly.

The mother's heart answered to his own, and the scene was deeply affecting to all except Perry, who still stood defiant.

"The woman is not nor never was my wife," said he, disdainfully, as he held the idea that this was the only charge against him, and he grew bolder.

"It is false!" said Mr. Hawkins, confronting him. "I am the man that performed the ceremony."

And he briefly stated the particulars of the time and place, and which proved that he told the actual truth.

"And now," said the detective, watching him narrowly as he spoke, "I arrest you on two charges. The first, of stealing bonds to the extent of twenty thousand dollars, from Captain Studley, whom you will doubtless recognize," and he pointed to the gentleman named.

"The second charge is a graver one. I arrest you as the chief of a band of counterfeiters, whom I have long been looking for. The gang I have already in custody, and now I take you."

Perry seemed to be paralyzed at this sudden attack from all quarters, when he had deemed himself secure.

The detective advanced to seize him, when with a quick movement, which was altogether unexpected by the company, he snatched a pistol from his breast and fired at the detective.

The bullet passed harmlessly over his head, and ere Perry had time to fire another shot, they had rushed in upon him.

He fought fearfully, dealing his blows right and left with tremendous power.

With a sudden bound he cleared himself, and darted for the window.

Quick as thought, Butts put out his foot, and tripped him heavily to the ground.

Ere he could regain his feet, the detective had jumped upon him, and snapped the irons on his hands and feet, and he was fast in the toils.

Then the detective, bidding the party good-bye, seized Perry by the arm, and saying he would call and see them to-morrow for a general explanation, he bore away his prisoner in triumph, and placing him in the carriage he had brought, he drove to headquarters.

* * * * *

And now, kind reader, our story is ended. A few words more as to the after history of the characters who have figured in it.

Perry was brought to trial, and out of pity for his long-lost daughter, Captain Studley did not appear on the charge of the stolen bonds, which had been restored to him.

Mattie also pitied the wretch in his abject misery, and the consequence was that the only charge under which he was indicted was that of counterfeiting; and the evidence produced not being of the strongest nature, he received a sentence of twenty years.

His spirit was broken, and, after ten years of labor, he was, through the efforts of his friends, discharged and taken home; but he never had the ambition to retrieve his name and atone for the past, and, after being taken care of for three years, he died.

A fit epitaph for his grave would have been: "Here lie the ashes of a life misspent."

William Wilson and Mattie were married, and after a short time they returned to New York, from whence they soon after sailed for Savannah, their future home.

There they are now residing, and two beautiful children have blessed their union.

Captain Studley's influence enabled him to advance rapidly in business, and in a few years he has become one of the most prosperous men in that city.

His real name, reader, I will not disclose, lest it might make him more conspicuous, and I wish him to rest on his own merits.

"Butts," the hero of our story, but now known under the stylish name of Sinclair, was taken under Wilson's instruction, and promises yet to be as successful as his employer. He combined his father's brilliant qualities with a noble heart, and as these talents were used in the right direction, it stands to reason that he should succeed.

As for Thompson, the detective, he retired from business, as he said he would, and removing to Virginia, he bought a place and settled down.

He would have preferred to remain in the city, but he feared for his life after the last grand haul he had made in capturing the gang, and, as he said:

"He did not wish to die before he had a chance to enjoy life; he preferred to leave the scenes of his exploits," he emigrated to a State where he was unknown.

Rumor has it that he afterward removed to another state, namely, the state of matrimony. How true the report is, I can not say, as I have not seen him for some years.

But little more remains to be told. The gang were all convicted, and sent to prison, and thus the community was rid of one of its greatest evils.

Many were the threats uttered by the gang against the detective, as to their revenge upon him when they should be released from prison, but the detective, by his removal, had outwitted them, and escaped harmless.

Mr. Hawkins still continues to reside in the city, engaged in the good work.

And now, reader, our story is ended.

THE END.

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